



SACRED HISTORY:
OR THE
Historical Part of the Holy Scriptures
OF THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS;
DIGESTED
INTO DUE METHOD,
WITH RESPECT TO
ORDER OF TIME AND PLACE.
WITH
OBSERVATIONS,
TENDING TO
ILLUSTRATE SOME PASSAGES THEREIN.

BY THOMAS ELLWOOD.

VOLUME I.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

BURLINGTON:

PUBLISHED BY DAVID ALLINSON.

NEW-YORK: PRINTED BY DEARE AND ANDREWS.

1804.

tain-
light.

UNIVERSITY
OF PITTSBURGH
LIBRARIES



DAR. RM.

BS635

E55

1804

V. 1

THIS BOOK PRESENTED BY
Friends'
Historical Society of
Swarthmore College

for the go.

PREFACE.

WHAT Cicero saith of history in general, namely, that it is, *Temporum testis, lux veritatis, vita memoria, magistra vitæ, & nuncia antiquitatis*; i. e. *The witness of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the mistress of life, and the messenger of antiquity*, cannot be so well verified of any particular history, as of that which, being written by divinely inspired penmen, is contained in the books of the Old and New Testament: the former of which is the subject of this volume.

Of the matter nothing need be said, nothing perhaps can be said, to add to the excellency or credit thereof: but of the motive of inducement to this undertaking, somewhat, peradventure, may be necessary to be hinted.

Two things more especially led me to it:

One, that the divine providence, the wisdom, power, goodness, and favour of God, in ordering, disposing, providing for, preserving, defending, and wonderfully delivering his servants and people out of the greatest straits, difficulties, hardships, dangers and sufferings, being more directly, and in a continued series and course of actions, set before the reader's eye; he might be thereby the more stirred up and engaged to admire and magnify, to love, reverence, and fear the Lord, and be the more careful not to offend him.

The other motive was, that all, the youth especially, of either sex, under whatsoever religious denomination they go, might be furnished with such an entertainment, as might yield them at once both profit and delight.

For having, not without uneasiness of mind, observed how much too many, not to say most, mis-spend their precious time; some in reading vain fictions (called romances) lewd novels, lascivious poems, and vice-promoting play-books; others, more soberly and religiously inclined, in reading other books, if not much hurtful, yet not much instructive and beneficial; I hoped I should do no unacceptable service, at least to some, in presenting them with the SACRED HISTORY, so digested, as might both invite their attention, and recompense their pains in reading, with the double advantages of godly instruction and virtuous pleasure.

If any shall think the undertaking needless, because the history is already extant in the bible; I intreat such to consider, that although the bible be, or may be, in every hand, and ought to be read (by all that can read) with diligence and attention of mind; yet since the history lies diffused and scattered throughout the whole book, it is no small discouragement to the reader, that is desirous to peruse the history in a regular course, to find the thread thereof frequently cut off by the interposition of other matters, as genealogies of persons, derivations of families and colonies, ceremonial laws, peculiarly adapted to the Mosaic dispensation and abrogated with it, prophetic denunciations of judgments against some persons or people, of whom scarce any further memorial now remains than their bare names.

To remove all such discouragements, I have in this work endeavoured to draw together the dispersed parts of the history; connecting them into a continued series, and reducing, as near as I could, each part in its due place, with respect to the right order of time. But this perhaps may be thought to relate rather to another head, the manner of performance.

Of that I shall not say much, but leave it to the reader's judgment, when he shall have gone through the whole. Yet some few things for his information, it may be needful he should be told beforehand, viz.

1. That in digesting the following history, I have not strictly tied myself to the letter, and very syllables

of the text : but, with all due circumspection, and care to retain the matter and sense, have sometimes varied the expression, as I thought might be most beneficial to the reader ; sparing, by that means, many circumlocutions and repetitions of the same matter.

2. Where I have at all left the last English translation, I have followed, for the most part, some other, English or Latin ; or the judgment of some eminently learned expositors. And when I mention sometimes the Bishop's Bible, I intend thereby that translation and edition which was printed with notes, by Barker, the queen's printer, in the year 1600, in the old black letter : which edition, I think, is called the Bishop's Bible, to distinguish it from other editions.

3. In the chronology, (especially with respect to the times of the rule of the judges, and of the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah) I found so much uncertainty, and so little certainty or agreement amongst interpreters about it, that I chose to have left it as I found it, rather than spend time and pains to reconcile the different computations delivered in the books of the Kings, and of the Chronicles. Yet, to gratify the desires of some, I have, since the copy was written, added at the bottom, under the letters A. M. the year of the world, to the most remarkable stories. Wherein, for the most part, I have followed the account of time as it is delivered by R. Blome, in his elaborate work called, ' The History of the Old and New Testament,' the quarto edition.

4. The helps I have had, have been chiefly from Dr. Gell's Essay towards an amendment of the last English translation of the Bible ; Hugh Broughton's Consent of Scripture ; Godwyn's Moses and Aaron (whom, for the most part, I have followed, in reducing the Hebrews' measures and coins to the English) ; the Annotations of Tremellius and Junius (which I have oftener used than named) ; and for the expositions of proper names, whether of persons or places, I have been beholden to the table of Robert F. Herry.

5. The whole work is divided into three parts, without any particular regard to the seven periods of time, into which chronologers and historiographers (out of a desire to reduce them to some sort of proportion with the six days' work, and seventh day's rest in the first week of the creation) have generally divided the ages of the world.

6. Of these three parts, the first reaches from the creation to the death of Moses ; when the children of Israel, being come to the border of the promised land, were ready to enter in. And it contains the remarkable delivered in the pentateuch, or five books of Moses, and that of Job ; which is here inserted between the books of Genesis and Exodus.

7. The second part, beginning with the book of Joshua, goes through that, and the book of Judges, with the first book of Samuel ; and carries on the history from the death of Moses to the death of Saul, and the account that was brought to David of it. In this are recounted the transactions of chief note under all the judges, as well ordinary as extraordinary, and under Saul, the first anointed king of Israel ; whose rule I chose to cast into this part with the judges, as not holding him fit, with respect to his odd accession to the government, his quick rejection from it, and mal-administration of it, to be the head of the succeeding monarchy.

8. The third part, by much the largest, beginning with the second book of Samuel, sets forth the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah, with the most memorable acts and occurrences therein, from David, to the return of the last Babylonish captivity, and rebuilding of the temple ; taking in the prophets as near as may be in their several times.

I am not ignorant that divers have laboured on this subject diversely ; but none that I know of, hath pursued and carried it on in this method.

About the beginning of the last age there was a treatise written under the title of, 'The general View of the Holy Scriptures ;' the author of which was not

certainly known, but was supposed to be the learned Broughton : and, indeed, the stile and structure would persuade it.

It was sometime after re-printed, with additions, by Thomas Hayne ; and is doubtless an artful discourse in its way and kind ; but it doth not pretend to give a complete history, or to relate historically the various transactions recorded in the holy text.

To omit some others of less note, there was published, not many years ago, ‘ A complete History and Mystery of the Old and New Testament ;’ a book well fraught with variety of useful matter : but the mystery is not only interwoven with the history, but hath also so much over-grown it, that the reader, who shall desire to peruse the history by itself, will be at some loss in that respect, how well soever otherwise he may employ his time therein.

Of all that I have yet seen, that which promises most fairly to answer this end, is R. Blome’s late History of the Old and New Testament. A work, indeed, not only instructive and delightful, but pompous and magnificent. But that book, by reason of the many plates, is swelled to so great a bulk and price, that it seems not calculated for common readers.

Those therefore, notwithstanding, none of which came to my hand until I had finished this work, I hope I may escape the censure, if not obtain the favour, of the ingenious reader, for publishing this ; which I take to be more agreeable to the title and end of an history than the former, and to be more within the reach of every reader, to say no more than the latter.

So far am I from aiming by this to draw any from reading the Holy Scriptures, that I earnestly desire and press all, who shall read this history, to compare it with the text itself ; that, like noble Bereans, they may search and see whether what I have herein delivered be agreeable therewith.

I hope there will not any thing be found in the following sheets from whence occasion may be taken to raise controversy. There is too much of that in the

world already : and I have studiously endeavoured not to administer any occasion for more. If in any thing my pen has slipped ; or if any one shall apprehend I have erred, where I have delivered my sense different from the sentiments of others, he that will be so kind, in a fair and friendly way, to inform me of 'it, shall have a due acknowledgment of his kindness, and the best satisfaction I can give him. But of common cavillers, whose carping censures scarce any thing that is good can escape, I shall not hold myself obliged to take notice.



SACRED HISTORY :

OR THE

HISTORICAL PART OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

OF THE

OLD TESTAMENT.

.....
PART I.
.....

THE

Book of Genesis ;

so called,

BECAUSE IT TREATS OF THE BEGINNING AND GENERATION OF MAN, AND THE OTHER CREATURES ; CONTAINING AN HISTORY OF ABOUT 2369 YEARS.

FROM the creation to the flood, though more than sixteen hundred years did pass between, the historical account of things, as they stand recorded in the holy text, is very short ; the heads only of matters being delivered, and that but briefly. Of these, the first most remarkable is the admirable order of the creation, whereby the chaos was reduced into form, divided into six days' work.

In the first day 'the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light ;' light being brought forth by that effective word. And it is observable, that the first thing which we read God pronounced good, was the light : 'God saw the light that it was good.' But he did not see it good that the light should be intermixed with darkness ; therefore he 'divided the light from the darkness.' And 'the light,' thus separated from

the darkness, 'God called day;' but 'the darkness he called night.'

In the second day, God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters; and it was so.' For God by that word made the firmament (that is, spread forth the expansum, or convex, which we call the firmament) 'and divided the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament. And God called the firmament heaven.'

In the third day, God said, 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he seas.' And now the second time we read, 'God saw that it was good.'

Here, by the way, it may not be amiss to observe, that what, in ver. 1, the translators render 'In the beginning,' some other learned men render 'In wisdom;' so reading it, 'In wisdom God created the heaven and the earth.' Dr. Gell, in his Essay towards the amendment of the last English translation of the Bible, page 2, tells us, the Targum of Jerusalem turns it so; and himself approves that version, saying, It is indeed no other than what David expresseth in Psalm civ. where, having paraphrased upon the works of God in the creation, he breaks forth into admiration, ver. 24, saying, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.' And in Psalm cxxxvi. exhorting to give thanks unto the Lord for his manifold mercies, he adds, 'To him that by wisdom made the heavens,' ver. 5; where by wisdom is understood the Son of God, by whom, says the evangelist, John i. 3, 'all things were made;' which also the apostle confirms, saying, 'By (or in) him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth,' Coloss. i. 16; calling him also the beginning, ver. 18. And in the Revelation he is called 'the beginning of the creation of God,' Rev. iii. 14. So that if we read the words, as in the text, 'In the beginning God cre-

ated the heaven and the earth,' it seems we are by the word 'beginning' to understand Christ the Son of God, who sets himself forth under the name also of wisdom, Prov. viii. And the same Dr. Gell, in the place before quoted, tells us, the interlineary gloss interprets, *in principio*, in the beginning, *in filio suo*, in his Son. But if the words 'in the beginning,' be understood of time, and the order of the creation, it may occasion a doubt whether, in a strict sense, the heaven and the earth were created in the beginning, that is, were the beginning, or first part, of the creation. For the heaven being set in the second day's work, and the earth in the third; since a third and a second do imply a first, it seems not to stand with propriety of speech, to call the third day, or the second day, the beginning. But the whole work, and every part of it, both first and last, was undoubtedly made in wisdom. But of this a touch only. Let us now go forward.

The earth thus drained of the waters, the next work was, to give it a prolific virtue. Wherefore God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so.' And here again it is said, 'God saw that it was good.'

In the fourth day God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. And let them be for lights in the heaven, to give light upon the earth; and it was so: for God made two great lights, both great, but one greater than the other; the greater, which is the sun, to rule the day; and the lesser, which is the moon, to rule the night. He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.'

In the fifth day, God said, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath

life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. So God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And he blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas; and let fowl multiply in the earth.'

From those words, in ver. 20, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl,' &c. an opinion hath arisen, that fowls took their origin wholly from the water. But from what is said in chap. ii. ver. 19, 'Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air,' hath sprung another opinion, that fowls derive their beginning from the earth. These being the two extremes, the middle may probably be the right, that they had their original partly from the waters, and partly from the earth. This Tremellius and Junius favour. And this might render the flesh of fowls less gross than that of beasts; more firm than that of fishes.

In the sixth and last day's work, God in the first place added to the fertility of the earth, which before brought forth only vegetables, the production of animals, saying, 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kinds; and it was so. And God saw that it was good.'

And now, after all the other parts of the creation were finished in their beautiful order fit for the reception and use of man, God altered his stile. For whereas before he only said, Let this or that be so or so; now God said, 'Let us make man (or Adam) in our image after our likeness, and let them (for male and female created he them, chap. v. 2.) have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'

Herein then, besides the divine image wherein man was made, may the origination of man be justly ac-

counted more noble and honourable than that of any of the rest of the creatures, that whereas they were produced by a word speaking, God is said to have formed man, Gen. ii. 7; and man is called the workmanship of God, Eph. ii. 10; and the offspring of God, Acts xvii. 28. And though the matter man was formed of was but the dust of the ground, yet God breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, man thereby became a living soul.

Man, thus excellently made, was blessed by God, both male and female, with two great blessings, fruitfulness and dominion; the Lord God saying unto them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every thing that moveth upon the earth.' See Psalm viii.

Then appointing unto man for food every seeding herb, and the fruit of every seeding tree, and to the beasts, fowls, and creeping things every green herb, God took, if I may so speak, a general survey of his whole work, and pronounced it very good.

After the work of creation was finished, and a day of rest had succeeded, the next historical remark we meet with, is God's planting a garden eastward in Eden, with the description and bounds thereof: his putting therein the man whom he had formed, and appointing him to dress and keep it, with the general permission and particular prohibition what to eat, and what to abstain from. Then follows the naming of the creatures by Adam, as the Lord caused them to come before him; after which comes the particular description of the formation of woman, which was thus:

After the Lord had declared, that it was not good the man should be alone, and that therefore, he would make him an help meet, or fit for him, he caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, for so was he called from the red earth of which he was made; and while Adam slept, God took out one of his ribs, closing up the flesh instead thereof, and made or builded the rib

into a woman, and brought her unto the man. Adam, sensible of what the Lord had done, as soon as he saw the woman, said, 'This is now bone (out) of my bones, and flesh (out) of my flesh. She shall be called woman, (or manness) because she was taken out of man. Therefore, (says the text) shall a man leave his father and his mother, (that is, rather than his wife;) and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.' This was the divine institution of marriage with the law thereof, in the naked innocency and unblushing simplicity of the man and his wife, while they abode in the delightful garden of Eden.

But from this state of innocency and happiness they fell, being betrayed by the malice and guile of an adversary; who he was, and how he came to be so, must be sought elsewhere; for Moses in this relation gives no account of the fall, or indeed, of the creation of angels, yet frequent mention we afterwards find in the holy scriptures of angels, and those both good and bad. Good they were all created, as all things else were that God made; but that some of them kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, and through pride, aspiring higher, sinned against God, and were by him cast down to hell, we are taught by the apostles Peter and Jude, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude vi. to which some additional light is given from Job iv. 18, John viii. 44, and 1 John iii. 8. The chief of these fallen angels, called here the serpent, and afterwards the old serpent, Rev. xx. 2; and Beelzebub, or the prince of the devils, which were the rest of those angels that fell also; envying the happiness of man, that he should retain and enjoy that state of innocency and bliss, in which he was made and set, whereas they had forfeited and lost theirs, contrived how to beguile the man, and draw him also into transgression, that he might have him a companion in punishment; and in order thereunto he thus set upon the woman, as the weaker vessel, by whom, if gained, he might the more easily prevail upon the man. Accosting her therefore in a slight manner, he said, 'Yea, (or indeed) hath

God said, 'Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?' Nay, said the woman, it is but one tree that is forbidden us: 'For we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.'

God's word was positive: 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' (or dying thou shalt die,) Gen. ii. 17. The woman in repeating it renders it only doubtful, or questionable, 'lest ye die.' There the serpent taking hold, replies, 'Ye shall not surely die: but God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.'

This kindled desire in the woman, who looking on the fruit through the optic of ambition, apprehended the tree was 'good for food, pleasant to the sight, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; wherefore she took of the fruit thereof, and did not only eat of it herself, but gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.'

Now were the eyes of them both opened; but it was but to see their own nakedness and misery. They had, indeed, acquired knowledge, but it was a knowledge, arising from a sad experience, that the serpent had beguiled them, and drawn them from the good which they knew before, into the evil which they knew not.

This dear-bought knowledge brought upon them at once both guilt, and the effect of guilt, shame; so that sewing fig-leaves together, they made themselves aprons to gird about them to cover their new discovered nakedness. 'And when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, they hid themselves from his presence amongst the trees of the garden.' But when the Lord called forth Adam by name, rousing him up with an, 'Adam, Where art thou?' Adam was then fain to make answer, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.'

In confessing his nakedness, he confessed his guilt, of which thereby God convicted him. 'Who told thee,' said God to him, 'that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?'

Adam was not yet grown so hardy as to deny the fact; but he endeavoured to excuse himself, by laying the blame upon his wife, not without a tacit reflection therein upon God himself. 'The woman,' said he, 'whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat.'

God thereupon calling the woman to account, 'What is this,' said he to her, 'that thou hast done?' She also readily confessed the fact, yet willing, like her husband to throw the blame as much as she could off herself, alledged that she had been drawn thereto by the guile of the serpent. 'The serpent,' said she, 'beguiled me, and I did eat.'

God did not proceed with the serpent as he had done with the man and the woman, whom by examination he had brought to confession, and so to conviction; but presently passing sentence upon the serpent, he said, 'Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruse thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

To the woman he said, 'I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.'

And unto Adam he said, 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife (in opposition to my voice) and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee not to eat: cursed be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the

sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'

The proper doom or sentence being thus passed on each, 'God drove out the man from the garden of Eden, and sent him to till the ground from whence he had been taken:' and lest, as through a too eager desire of knowledge he had already transgressed, 'he should put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever,' God, having sent him out of the garden, 'placed at the east end thereof cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life;' yet he provided them better apparel than the fig-leaf coverings they had stiched together themselves; to wit, coats of skins, which he ordered for them.

'Adam now called his wife's name Eve, because she was to be the mother of all living; that is, of all the race of mankind that should live upon the earth. And he knew his wife; and she thereupon conceiving, bare a son, whom she called Cain, (which signifies possession,) saying, 'I have gotten a man from the Lord.' So we read it: but word for word it is, 'I have gotten the man, the Lord,' says Dr. Gell, Essay, p. 27. where also he quotes Martin Luther so rendering it. From which expression some conjecture, that Eve was so far mistaken in Cain as to take him (who was indeed but the first born after the transgression) for that seed, which God had said should bruise the head of the serpent.

But, however, as Cain may be called the first-fruit of the flesh, being the first of men that came by carnal procreation; so he was the first persecutor, the first murderer:* for he slew his own, his then (for aught appears) only brother; and that for no other cause, but that his brother worshipped God more sincerely, and more acceptably than himself, which gave occasion for one to say of him,

* About the year of the world 123.

‘He was the first that did his hands imbrue
‘In human blood ; and by one murder slew
‘The fourth part of mankind.’.....

This unnatural murder happened thus : After Eve had born Cain, she conceived again, and bare Abel, who when he was grown up, was a keeper of sheep, as Cain was a tiller of the ground. In process of time each of them brought an offering to the Lord, Cain of the fruit of the ground, and Abel of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. The Lord, who saw and regarded the heart of each, had respect unto Abel, and to his offering ; but unto Cain and his offering, he had not respect. Cain was hereupon very wroth, which the falling of his countenance shewed, insomuch that God, taking notice, said unto him, ‘Why art thou wroth ? and why is thy countenance fallen ? If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted ? But if thou dost not well, sin lieth at the door,’ &c.

This soft reproof, which one would have thought might have pacified wrathful Cain, seems to have raised his anger higher ; for taking an occasion, not long after, to discourse with his brother Abel, when they were alone in the field together, he on a sudden falling upon his innocent brother, slew him. And when the Lord, calling him to account for it, examined him where his brother Abel was ? He as resolutely as falsely answered, I know not ; and, as if he took it for an affront that he should be questioned for his brother, surlily asked, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper ?’ But the Lord convicted him by the voice of Abel’s blood, said, ‘What hast thou done ? The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.’ As if he had said, ‘though thou disdainest to be thought thy brother’s keeper, yet thou hast not stuck to be thy brother’s murderer ; and thou shalt know that I am the avenger of thy brother’s innocent blood, which thou hast wickedly, treacherously, unnaturally shed, and which cries unto me for vengeance.’ And therefore, ‘Now art thou cursed from the earth,’ said God to Cain, ‘which hath opened her mouth to

receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; nor is that all, but a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.'

This sentence, gentle in comparison of the heinousness of the crime, Cain complained highly of, crying unto the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.' So we read it; and so both Pagninus and Tremellius turn it: though all acknowledge the Hebrew word, which they render punishment, signifies, iniquity; and so Arias Montanus gives it. But, indeed, Cain seemed not so sensible of his sin as of his punishment, as his following words import: 'Behold said he, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid, (he puts his loss of advantages in the earth before his loss of the presence of God) and I shall be a fugitive (added he) and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever findeth me shall slay me.'

Although that, according to the Talique law given after, Gen. ix. 6, had been but just on Cain, yet inasmuch as God had taken this cause into his own immediate cognizance, and had fixed the punishment; that therefore, Cain suffering judicially, might not suffer extrajudicially also, nor his bloody act pass into example for others, God to secure him, issued forth his royal proclamation, if I may so speak, declaring, 'that whosoever should slay Cain, vengeance should be taken on him seven-fold;' and that none might do it by mistake, 'God set a mark on Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.'

Cain, thus branded, went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, which signifies fugitive; and having by this time taken a wife, she conceived and bare him a son, named Enoch; after whose name Cain called the city, which afterwards he began to build.

Cain's posterity is registered for seven generations, perhaps to shew who were the authors or inventors of certain trades; and who were instrumental to corrupt

the better seed of Adam afterwards. Amongst these, Lamech is noted, not only for his propensity to shed blood, of which he seems to have boasted to his wives, but for bringing polygamy into the world, being the first we read of that had more wives than one at a time. He took two, Adah and Zillah. Adah bare him two sons, Jabal and Jubal; Jabal first taught men to live in tents, and to breed and order cattle. Jubal was the first inventor of musical instruments, as the harp and organ. Zillah, his other wife, bare him Tubal-Cain, who was an instructor of artificers in brass and iron; whence a learned writer infers, that he was the first that made armour and weapons of war. 'A trade,' says he, 'very fit for one of Cain's posterity.' Dr. Gell, Essay, p. 45.

Thus have we done, for the present, with Cain and his offspring, which was all swept away by the succeeding flood; I wish his spirit had never entered any since.

But Adam, having by an untimely death lost his son Abel, knew his wife again, who, conceiving, bare him another son, and called his name Seth; for God, said she, Gen. iv. 25, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.* Through this Seth, Adam's line, in ten generations before the flood, with the age of each of these long-lived fathers, is drawn forth in the fifth chapter of Genesis.

Among these, in the seventh degree from Adam, lived Enoch;† to whom this singular testimony is given, that he walked with God, or pleased God in his walking, and that he was not, for God took him; which in the Epistle to the Hebrews is thus paraphrased, 'that he was not found, because God had translated him, that he should not see death, having before his translation received this testimony, that he pleased God,' Heb. xi. 5: and a prophecy of his, not elsewhere found, at least not in Canonical Scripture, is remembered, and cited by the apostle Jude, in his general Epistle, ver. 14, 15.

* A. M. 130.

† A. M. 662.

The two great families derived from Adam, viz. that by Cain, and that by Seth, who succeeded righteous Abel, as they differed in their natures and course of life, so they were distinguished one from the other by very different appellations; for the offspring of Cain, being wholly given up to worldly pleasures, and minding only earthly things, were called men, or sons of men; but the offspring of Seth, because they addicted themselves to virtue and piety, and professed to worship the true God, were called the sons of God: and well had it been for these sons of God, if they had kept up that distinction practically, as well as nominally.

That Seth and his progeny would, for some ages, be shy of conversing with Cain and his descendants, from the knowledge they must needs have had of that barbarous fratricide committed by Cain, in the inhuman murder of his brother Abel, may reasonably be supposed:

But time working off that aversion, and as the world grew more replenished with people, the godly generation indulging themselves a greater liberty, they entertained a more free and familiar conversation with the wicked offspring of cursed Cain, than was fit or safe for them; by which means, having exposed themselves to the allurements of the women, the lust of the eye, representing the daughters of men fair, prevailed upon the sons of God to join themselves in marriage with them.

It is not to be doubted but these, who were the offspring of the righteous, and professed themselves to be the sons of God, were not a little by this time degenerated also from the virtue and piety of their ancestors; for we find, that immediately after this, God complained of the wickedness of man in general, Gen. vi. 5; and that ‘all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth,’ ver. 12; and we know it is a maxim, that “*Nemo repente fit turpissimus*,” “No man arrives to the height of wickedness on a sudden.”

But how depraved soever they were before, this joining themselves in marriage with those who were

not one with them in the profession at least of religion, and the worship of God, did fill up the measure of their iniquity, and set the seal of destruction upon them; for where we read, 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they chose,' it follows immediately, 'And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on earth; so that, (speaking after the manner of men) it is said, it grieved him at the heart: whereupon he declared, he would destroy (or blot out) man, whom he had created, from the face of the earth.'

This happened in the days of Noah, the tenth from Adam, who was a just man, and perfect in his generation, and walked with God. The apostle Peter calls him 'a preacher of righteousness,' 2 Peter ii. 5. And God himself gave this testimony to him, 'Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation,' Gen. vii. 1. Therefore Noah found grace, or favour, in the eyes of the Lord; so that he, and for his sake, his family, eight persons in all, were saved from the general destruction, which was brought by the flood upon all the rest of mankind.

Of this overflowing scourge the merciful God gave mankind fair warning long before it came upon them, both by the preaching of Noah, and by the preparation he made for the building of the ark for the saving of his household; by which he is said to have condemned the world, Heb. xi. 7.

For after the time allotted by God for men to repent and reform in, (supposed to be the hundred and twenty years mentioned in Gen. vi. 3.) was well nigh expired, and no amendment appeared, but God still saw the earth was corrupt, and filled with violence, and that all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth; the Lord then declaring to Noah his resolution to destroy all flesh from the earth by a flood of waters, com-

manded him to make an ark or ship, the first that we read of, for receiving and preserving a seed to replenish the depopulated earth.

This ark he directed Noah to make of gopher wood, which some take to be a kind of cedar, and to pitch it both within and without, that the waters might not pierce it. The length of it was to be three hundred cubits, the breadth fifty cubits, and the height thirty cubits; which taking it for the common cubit, containing a foot and a half, or half a yard, makes the dimensions of the ark to be four hundred and fifty feet, or one hundred and fifty yards in length, seventy-five feet, or twenty-five yards in breadth; and forty-five feet, or fifteen yards in height. Some of the ancients, not thinking the ark by these dimensions roomy enough to receive commodiously all the creatures that were contained therein, with their stowage of provisions and necessities, have extended this measure by the geometrical cubit, one of which contains six of the common cubits, thereby making the ark six times bigger every way, in length, breadth, and height.

In favour of which opinion both Origen and Augustine are cited by Godwyn in his *Moses and Aaron*, l. vi. c. 9. whom Wilson in his *Christian Dictionary*, 'verbo' Cubit, follows; and Severus Sulpitius, an ancient writer, as being cotemporary with Augustine, seems to have inclined that way also, when speaking of the ark, he calls it, '*Arcam immensæ magnitudinis*,' 'An ark of excessive bigness.'

But this, by some of the modern writers, is rejected and exploded as an extravagant notion; and the learned Dr. Wilkins, in his *Real Character*, Part II. chap. 5. sect. 6. p. 162, &c. has taken much pains to shew, from John Buteo's Tract '*De Arcâ Noe*,' that the ark measured by the common cubit was sufficiently capacious of all, both creatures and provisions, that were appointed to be received into it.

Leaving therefore the reader to his own judgment upon it, whatever the dimensions of it were, it was to be divided into three stories or decks, and those

into several rooms or apartments ; but one window served it for light, and one door to go in and out at, which was placed in the side of it.

According to this direction did Noah make the ark ; and when it was finished, God having before assured him, that although he destroyed all flesh beside, yet he would establish his covenant with him, seven days before the rains began to fall, gave notice to Noah, that he should come into the ark with his family, and should take in with him of every living thing of all flesh, both of cattle and beasts of the field, birds and fowls of the air, and creeping things, two of a sort, one male, and one female, to keep seed alive to stock the earth again with ; but of clean beasts he should take in by sevens, that is, three pairs of males and females of every clean sort, both for breed and food after the flood, and the seventh for sacrifice. All which creatures, God by secret instinct, disposed to come and offer themselves unto him ; and with them he was also to take in food of all sorts sufficient to sustain himself and them.

When Noah, pursuant to this direction, had entered the ark himself, with his wife and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, with their three wives, and had taken in all the creatures, with provisions, as God had appointed, the Lord shut him into the ark. This was in the six hundredth year of his age ; and on the seventeenth day of the second month* were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows, or flood gates of heaven, opened, so that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. And when it had continued raining forty days and forty nights, the waters were so risen, that they lifted up the ark, and bare it up above the earth : so that as the waters still increasing rose higher and higher, the ark swam or floated, upon the surface of the waters.

* It may be observed, that at the time when our author wrote, the year began in what is now called the third month, then called the first month, and the rest in order. This the reader is desired to take notice of, whenever the number of a month is mentioned.

And to that degree did the waters prevail, that the highest hills being covered, the waters stood fifteen cubits deep upon the tops of the mountains. An hundred and fifty days did the waters prevail before they were quite drawn off again. In which time all flesh died that moved upon the earth; not only the whole race of mankind, but every living substance of fowl, cattle, beast, and creeping thing that moved upon the dry land, were destroyed from off the earth, save Noah only, and they that were with him in the ark.

The work being thus effected for which this flood was sent, God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; wherefore having stopped the fountains of the deep, and shut the windows of heaven, whereby he restrained the rains from falling, he caused a wind to pass over the earth, which made the waters begin to assuage; and returning thenceforward continually from off the earth, at the end of the hundred and fifty days they were so far abated, that the ark rested upon one of the mountains of Ararat in the country of Armenia. This was on the seventh day of the seventh month, just five months from the beginning of the flood; from which time continuing to decrease until the tenth month following, on the first day of that month the tops of the mountains were seen.

This, no doubt, was a welcome sight to Noah; who wisely considering, that if the tops only of the mountains were discoverable, the waters must needs be deep still in the vallies, waited yet forty days before he attempted any further discovery; and then, opening the window of the ark, he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up.

About seven days after, for a further trial, he sent forth a dove; but she finding no rest for the sole of her foot, because the waters were yet on the face of the earth, returned to the ark; and Noah, putting forth his hand, took her into the ark to him.

Then staying yet other seven days, he sent forth the dove again, which in the evening returned to him, having in her bill an olive leaf plucked off; by which he knew that the waters were then abated from the earth: and waiting yet other seven days, he sent forth the dove the third time; and then she returned no more.

When Noah had staid till the first day of the first month, he removed the covering of the ark; and looking out, saw that the face of the ground was dried: yet, having a pious regard to God's direction, as well in coming forth, as in going in, he continued in the ark till the seven and twentieth day of the second month; so that he was in the ark somewhat more than a year. And needful it was that he should remain in the ark, not only till the waters were sunk and the ground well dried, but till the earth had produced some fresh food for the creatures that were in the ark to live upon.

Then did God bid Noah go forth, he and his wife, and his sons and their wives with him, and bring forth with him all the living creatures, that they might breed abundantly, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth; and Noah did as the Lord commanded him.

The first thing we read of righteous Noah, after he was safely landed, is, that he built an altar, the first that we have any mention of, and thereon offered burnt-offerings of clean beasts and fowls, sacrifices of thanksgivings and praise unto the Lord, for the deliverance and preservation he and his family had received; with which oblations, offered from a thankful and pious mind, the Lord was so well pleased, that he not only declared his acceptance thereof, but thereupon made a covenant with Noah, and in him with his posterity, the succeeding race of mankind, graciously promising, 'that he would not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, neither should there any more be a general flood to destroy the earth; and that while the earth remained, the appointed seasons of seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer

and winter, and day and night, should not universally cease ;' which covenant to confirm to man, and put men out of fear when they should see the clouds gather, and the sky look dark, and the rain fall, he set his bow, which we call the rainbow, in the cloud, to be for a token of the covenant between God and them.

Hitherto men had lived upon vegetables ; herbs and the fruits of trees were the food appointed them by God at the first, Gen. i. 29 ; but now, after the flood, their fare was enlarged, and flesh permitted them for food. ' Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you,' said God to Noah and his sons ; for I have now given you free liberty to eat of all the living creatures, as I did before of green herb : yet that men might not grow savage, and, like brute beasts, eat the creatures alive, he forbade them to eat the flesh with the life, that is the blood, thereof ; but first to take away the life, by letting out the blood, and then to dress and eat the flesh. And having renewed his former blessing of fertility to Noah and his sons, bidding them be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, he subjected all the creatures to them anew, telling them, ' The fear and dread of them should be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all the fishes of the sea ;' and that he would require the life of man of any beast that should take it away, as well as of any one man that should murder another.

The whole race of Cain being cut off by the flood, it might have been hoped, that the new world (so we may call that after the flood, as the apostle calls that before the flood, the old world, 2 Pet. ii. 5.) would have been planted with better people ; but as in the ark there were unclean beasts preserved as well as clean, so in Noah's family there was a Ham, as well as a Japheth and a Shem.

The first instance we have of Ham's impiety, was his discovering the nakedness of his father in a rude and profane manner, which his brethren dutifully and modestly covered ; whereby they procured their father's

blessing upon them, as Ham had deservedly drawn his curse upon himself.* For Noah, after he had performed his devotions to God, applying himself to husbandry, planted a vineyard; and being but a young beginner, not well experienced in the nature and the strength of the grape, he drank a little too liberally of the wine, and being drunk therewith, was uncovered, yet within his tent. His graceless son Ham, finding him in this condition, instead of covering his father's nakedness, went and discovered it, in a deriding manner, to his two brethren without. Shem and Japheth thereupon taking a garment laid it upon their shoulders, and, in reverence to their father, going backwards, covered their father's nakedness without seeing it. When therefore Noah, being recovered from his wine, understood how his younger son Ham had served him, and how regardful his other two sons had been of him, he said, 'Cursed be Canaan, (that is, all the posterity of Ham, as well as himself, for Canaan was the son of Ham, ver. 18.) a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren; but blessed, said he, be the Lord God of Shem. And God shall persuade Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be their servant.'

We read not of any other children that Noah had, but these three sons; from each of which descended a numerous offspring, which afterwards peopled many countries, and in process of time the whole inhabited world.

Shem is called the father of all the children of Eber, Gen. x. 21. Eber was great grandson, or the fourth from Shem; and from him both the people of Israel were called Ebrews (or Hebrews) and the language they spake was called the Hebrew tongue; so that from Shem came the Jews, besides many other people that inhabited Asia. This part of the world, which is called Europe, is generally held to have been peopled by the posterity of Japheth; and besides those Canaanites, and other people, which anciently possessed

* A. M. 1666.

the land of Canaan, the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and other eastern and southern nations, are taken to be the descendants of Ham.

Hitherto there was but one language used or known amongst men, neither had the sons of Noah, or their families, as yet divided or dispersed themselves in the world; but keeping together in a body, they journeyed onwards from the east, till finding an inviting plain in the land of Shinar, where some suppose the garden of Eden to have been, they sat down in order to settle there.

Now began two unruly passions to possess their minds,* ambition and fear. They were very desirous to make themselves a name; and no less afraid that they should be scattered abroad. To effect the one, and prevent the other, they agreed to build themselves a city, and a tower of such an extraordinary height, that by a figure called hyperbole, it is said they designed the top thereof should reach to heaven.

The projected height of this tower hath caused some to conjecture, that remembering the destruction brought on mankind by the late flood, and grown diffident of God's veracity, in keeping his covenant made with them, that he would not bring a general deluge over the earth again, they designed this topping tower for a place of refuge and security against the like danger.

However, that the design and undertaking was evil, and highly provoking to the Lord, is evident from the displeasure he shewed at it, and the punishment he inflicted upon them for it; for to check their presumption, and disappoint their purpose, he confounded their language, so that they could not understand one another's speech. This put them into so great disorder, that they were forced to give over building; for by reason of their different languages they could not communicate their minds and intentions one to another: and being thereby rendered incapable, not only of carrying on their intended work, but of conversing one

* A. M. 1757.

with another, and by that means deprived of the comforts and pleasures of mutual society and intercourse, and disabled from performing the reciprocal duties of friendship and common neighbourhood, they willingly withdrew one from another, and dispersed themselves; they who were of one language taking one way, and they who were of another speech going another way: for there is no reason to suppose that they were divided into as many several tongues as they were persons; but rather that the several families, computed to be seventy, which were afterwards to grow into several nations or people, had each a distinct and peculiar language given them.

Thus were they scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, which was the great thing they feared. And thus God at once both disappointed their design, and answered his own; which was, to re-people the earth more generally and speedily, than it is probable they of themselves would otherwise have done.

This confounding of their language gave name to the city that they had begun to build; which from thence was called Babel, signifying confusion.

Among these aspiring builders, a forward and leading man no doubt, was Nimrod, whose name imports a rebel. Great grandson he was to Noah by Ham, and a great usurper and tyrant; for which he was proverbially called, 'The mighty hunter before the Lord,' Gen. x. 9. And here he laid the foundation of the first great empire in the world, which at first was called the Babylonian, from this city Babel, or Babylon, the metropolis and seat of his empire. From whence he, or some of his posterity, going afterwards into Assyria, did there build the great city Nineveh, which the prophet Jonah many ages after was sent to prophesy against, and from thence this monarchy was afterwards called the Assyrian, the first of the four.

It was more than an hundred years after the flood, that this confusion of tongues, and dispersion of Noah's family, fell out; for Peleg, the son of Eber, who was great grandson to Shem, is reckoned to have been

born in the hundredth and first year after the flood, and had his name (Peleg) given him from that division of the earth, which in his time was parted amongst Noah's posterity, Gen. xi. 25.

About an hundred and twenty years after this was born Terah,* who, himself not faithful, for he served other gods, Josh. xxiv. 2, was the father of him who both was faithful, and is called, 'The Father of the Faithful,' Abraham, the tenth from Noah, as he was the tenth from Adam.

Terah had three sons, Haran, Nahor, and Abram; for so is the right order of their births. Haran, who was much elder than his brothers, dying before his father, left one son, named Lot, and two daughters, whereof one was named Milcah, and the other Iscah, both married to their uncles; Milcah to Nahor, so says the text, Gen. x. 29; and Iscah to Abram, as the Jews deliver, who will have her to be called Sarai, for her beauty and housewifery.

While Abram yet lived with his father Terah in Mesopotamia, the God of glory appeared to him, (so Stephen briefly relates the matter before the council, Acts vii.) and said unto him, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.' Moses adds the blessing annexed to the command, viz. 'And I will make of thee a great nation,' Gen. xii. 2, 3. Whereupon Terah, understanding that God had appeared to his son Abram, and commanded him to remove from thence, and probably drawn by the proposed blessing, consented to go with him and his wife; and taking Lot along with them, they departed from Ur in Chaldaea, intending to travel into the land of Canaan. But in their way coming to Haran, which Stephen calls Charan, Acts vii, they took up their abode there for a while: in which time Terah died, being two hundred and five years old.

After Terah's death, Abram being now seventy and five years of age,† and mindful of God's command,

* A. M. 1873.

† A. M. 2083.

departed from Haran; and with Sarai his wife, and his cousin Lot, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, by which some understand the persons they had gained over to the true religion, pursued their journey, until they came into the land of Canaan, which was the country God had directed him to.

Being come into the land, and having passed through some parts of it, the Lord appeared again unto him, and made, if I may so speak, a deed of gift of that land unto Abram's seed long before he had seed, for Sarai his wife was barren, and when it was possessed by other people; for the Canaanite was then in the land, ver. 6. However, Abram, to shew his faith and thankfulness, worshipped the Lord, which is signified by his building an altar, in that place, where the Lord had appeared, and made so gracious a promise to him.

Long he had not been in Canaan, ere he was fain to pluck up his stakes, and remove his tent again; for there arose a grievous famine in the land. This obliged him for the preservation of himself and his family, to seek relief elsewhere; and Egypt lying near to that part of Canaan where he had settled, and being a fruitful country, he determined to travel thither, and sojourn there a while.

When he was come upon the borders of Egypt, and had observed the difference, in point of comeliness, betwixt his own fair wife and the Egyptian women, a fear began to enter him, that his wife's beauty would endanger his safety. He concluded that so fair a woman, so eminently excelling the women of that place, would soon be taken notice of, and as soon be desired. And because the world was not then grown to that height of dissoluteness, as lightly to invade the marriage bed, but nuptial ties were held too sacred to be violated, his fear suggested to his apprehension, that if they understood Sarai was his wife, they would kill him, that they might come to the enjoyment of her, without the imputation of adultery; a crime reputed, in that martial age, more heinous than murder.

To prevent this danger, he opened his mind to his wife ; and laying the ground of his fears upon her beauty, he begged her to say she was his sister, that she might not be taken for his wife : by which means he might not only escape the apprehended danger, but also might fare the better for her sake. Here nature shewed her utmost strength in this great good man. The principle of self-preservation had wrought so powerfully on him, and so wholly possessed his mind, that he seems not to have considered, or duly to have regarded, his wife's chastity and his own honour.

His fear was not groundless, nor was he deceived in his apprehension ; for no sooner was he come into Egypt, but the Egyptians had cast a longing eye upon his fair wife. Pharaoh's courtiers saw her, commended her to their king, and to court she was forthwith brought. Abram called her sister ; the king thereupon took her into his house, and intreated him well for her sake, bestowing great presents upon him. But watchful Providence would not suffer the great patriarch's bed to be defiled ; wherefore the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house, probably by inflicting some sudden sickness, or bodily infirmity upon them ; whereby both their desire towards the woman was probably restrained, and they made sensible that she was a married wife. Wherefore Pharaoh, calling Abram to him, and laying the blame upon him for misleading him, by not telling him she was his wife, but calling her sister, he in displeasure bid him take his wife and be gone ; commanding his servants also to send him and his wife away : yet withal to take care that nothing were detained from him, but that he should take with him all that he had.

This accident, it is probable, occasioned Abram to leave Egypt sooner than otherwise he would have done ; for the next account of him is, that he went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south : and being got into Canaan again, he travelled on to Bethel, to the place where he had made an altar to the Lord before he went into Egypt, and there he worshipped God.

Abram was now, through the blessing of God, grown very rich, not in cattle only, but in silver and gold also. His cousin Lot also had flocks, and herds, and tents ; which implies he had a family and substance of his own, distinct from that of Abram. And their families being large, and their flocks great, they were ready to overcharge the place, and want meat for their cattle ; which might probably be the more scarce, partly by reason of the late famine there, and partly also, for that the Canaanites, and the Perizzites did then dwell in the land, and it is likely would possess the more fruitful parts of the country. The scarcity of provisions and pasturage occasioned strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle, and the herdmen of Lot's cattle, and that troubled Abram ; who, fearing lest this contention among the servants, if not timely suppressed, might rise higher, to the endangering a breach of friendship betwixt his kinsman and him, took an opportunity to speak with his cousin Lot about it, and in soft and mild terms said unto him, ' Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen ; for we are brethren.' So the ancients reputed, and called those that sprang from one common root, though not in a direct line begotten by one and the same father ; in which respect these were brethren in a natural relation ; as with respect to religion, and the worship of the true God, they were brethren also in a spiritual relation : both which would suffer, if they should suffer contention, especially about the low things of this world, to spring up and get head between them or their dependants.

Abram therefore, to prevent the worst, proposes parting,* seeing their substance was grown so great, that they could not with conveniency, and needful accommodations, dwell any longer together ; and though himself was, in all respects, the greater and better man, yet (which shows it is not beneath greatness for a superior to condescend to an inferior) he gave his

couzin Lot the offer, to make his choice in what part of the land he would settle, himself being content to take what the other should leave. Lot, not minding to lose such an advantage, having with his eye surveyed the country, chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, which he had observed to be every where well watered, and very fertile. Thus, having parted by agreement, Lot journies eastward, and settles in the plain of Jordan, pitching his tent towards Sodom; the inhabitants of which place were, in that wicked age, some of the most wicked.

Abram remained still in the land of Canaan; and after Lot was gone from him, the Lord appeared again to him, and renewed to him the gift of that land to him and to his seed for ever, but in reversion; which deed of gift, penned, if I may so speak, by God himself, deserves, for the extraordinary rareness of it, to be here explained, as it stands inrolled in the best of records, the Holy Scriptures, thus: 'Lift up now thine eyes,' said God to Abram, 'and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.' Abram, thereupon removing his tent, went and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and there built an altar unto the Lord: which is a periphrasis of worshipping him.

Some time after this, fell out that memorable battle fought by four kings against five; the first pitched field of which we have any account in story. The occasion of which was this:

Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, had held five petty kings in a tributary subjection to him for divers years; of which number the king of Sodom was one. At length they jointly rebelled against him*; whereupon

* A. M. 2090.

he, with three other kings who were his allies, made war upon them, to reduce them to their former obedience; and they, with united forces, resolved to try it out in a pitched field. Wherefore having drawn their armies into the vale of Siddim, which after the destruction of Sodom was called the Salt Sea, they joined the battle there. The issue was, that the four kings prevailing, the five were put to flight.

The vale of Siddim, where the battle was fought, had in it many pits, out of which had been digged slime, (a kind of clammy earth called bitumen, very good to make mortar with) and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, in their flight, are said to have fallen there; whether entangled amongst those pits, they were overtaken and slain, or whether falling into some of those pits, they there hid and secured themselves till the pursuit was over, is not expressed. We read (ver. 17) that the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram very soon after, and treated with him about the spoils; which might induce one to think, that it was the same king, and not a new one.

However, after the field was fought, the victors, sacking the city of Sodom and Gomorrah, carried away all the goods, provisions, and prisoners: amongst whom was Abram's cousin Lot, who by this time was got into Sodom. We left him before upon his parting from his uncle, having his tent pitched only towards Sodom; but now he was gone to dwell in Sodom, and with the Sodomites was led away captive: so hazardous a thing it is to approach the neighbourhood of wicked men.

Amongst those that escaped, one came and brought the news of this overthrow to Abram, who then dwelt in the plain belonging to Mamre the Amorite, who, with his two brothers, Eshcol and Aner, were in league with Abram. Whereupon, Abram understanding that his cousin Lot was taken captive, mustered his men, who were in number three hundred and eighteen, born in his own house; and having instructed them of the justness of the cause he went

with the wicked, and for their sakes : for Abraham's argument was right and forcible, when he said ' To slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, or fare no better than the wicked, that be far from thee. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? ' Gen. xviii. 25.

As earnest as Lot was to get into Zoar, he did not care to stay long there. After the other cities of the plain were destroyed, he was afraid, it seems, to dwell in Zoar ; wherefore he went and dwelt in a cave in the mountains to which he was first directed, having only his two daughters with him. And here the greatest of mischiefs befel him ; for his daughters, having lost in Sodom their espoused husbands, and despairing of ever having any others, as thinking, perhaps, that all mankind were destroyed in the late conflagration, but their father and themselves ; at least, that no man would ever be likely to find them out in their solitary retirement in the cave, conspired how to betray their innocent father.

They pretended a care to preserve a seed of their father ; as if they were afraid, that if they did not, mankind would be extinct in him. But they had lived in Sodom, and it is doubtful had learned too much of the manners of that place ; and if the men they were betrothed to were of the breed of Sodom, which there is great reason to suppose, it argues a disposition in them to the licentiousness of the place, that would contract marriage with such. However, having an unnatural design upon their father, and knowing they could never draw the good man to commit so great a wickedness so long as he retained the use of his understanding, they contrive to divest him of his judicious sense, though not of his natural strength or ability.

The eldest daughter therefore having represented to her sister the condition they were in, proposed the expedient to her thus : ' Come, said she, let us make our father drink wine, and then we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.' Accord-

ingly, having sufficiently dosed the old man that evening with wine, and put him to bed, his eldest daughter went to bed to him; and having obtained her end of him, rose again, he not perceiving when she lay down, or when she arose. Next day she acquainted her sister how the project had succeeded, and advised her to deal with their father in like manner the next night. Accordingly, the old man being again ensnared with wine, the younger daughter went to bed to him; and her end being also answered, she rose again too undiscovered. Thus were Lot's two daughters with child by their father and had each of them a son from that incestuous congress;* to each of which sons Lot was both father and grandfather. But as he was the unwitting instrument of their generation, so when they were born, I do not find he took so much notice of them as to give them their names, but their mothers named them, the elder calling her son Moab, and the younger her son Ben-ammi; both mischievous enemies in after times to Israel, especially the Moabites, whose women, in Balak's time, through the counsel of Balaam, betrayed many of the Israelites into idolatry and whoredom, which brought a great plague upon Israel.

What became of Lot afterwards, the Holy Scripture doth not inform us; but we find that the posterity of these two sons of his, the Moabites and the Ammonites, were provided for by God, who helped the Moabites to conquer the Emims, and to possess their land, and the Ammonites to subdue the Zamzummims, and succeed them in theirs; and would not suffer the people of Israel, when they marched through the wilderness towards the land of Canaan, to dispossess either the Moabites or the Ammonites, or to fight with them, as will appear in the process of the history which now leads us back again to Abraham.

He having abode in the plain of Mamre, till he had seen the destruction of Sodom, removed soon after

* A. M. 2108.

from thence more southwardly, and sojourned in Gerar, the chief city of the Philistines.

Here again, fearing lest he should suffer for the sake of Sarah, if it should be known that she was his wife, he had recourse to his former politic contrivance, and by agreement between them he called her sister, and she him brother.

The king of Gerar, whose title was Abimelech, as that of the Egyptian king's was Pharaoh, and that of the Roman emperor's Cæsar, supposing her to be no other than Abraham's sister, took her to him, intending to make her his wife. Sure she must carry her years well, who, at ninety years of age, should be desired by a king. But so it seems it was; and Abraham, prompted by his fear, this second time exposed his own and his wife's honour to save his life, which he thought in danger.

But it may be supposed, that Sarah had by this time conceived that promised seed, which was to be Abraham's heir; of which, as well as of Abraham his friend, God had an especial care. Wherefore the Lord, having restrained Abimelech from touching her, did in a dream by night make him understand, that Sarah was Abraham's wife, charging him, on pain of death, forthwith to restore her safely to him. Abimelech therefore, excusing himself to God, and expostulating the matter with Abraham, returned him his wife safely again, with a royal present to him, and a close check upon her, for having had no more regard to her own and her husband's honour. Then, upon Abraham's prayer to God, the Lord healed Abimelech, taking off the disability by which he had restrained him from touching Sarah; and also restored to his wife and women their former fertility, which on that occasion he had before stopped.

It was not long after this, before, the time appointed being come, Sarah was brought to bed of a son, which Abraham, according as God had before directed, Gen. xvii. 19, called Isaac,* which signifies laughter;

* A. M. 2108.

and when he was eight days old he circumcised him, as God commanded, chap. xvii. 12. And now Sarah could laugh, not in distrust, as before, chap. xviii. 12, but with hearty joy.

But what was Sarah's joy was Hagar's sorrow. Her son Ishmael was fourteen years old when Isaac was born; and no doubt she had long lived in hope that he should have been Abraham's heir, and had infused that notion into her son, little thinking that her old mistress should have brought a boy at last to frustrate both their hopes. The disappointment must needs be great, and probably the resentment answerable, which in a while broke forth; for after Isaac was weaned, and grown a little up, his watchful mother caught Ishmael mocking him. And there is reason to suppose, both that this mockage had relation to his heirship, Ishmael scorning that such a youngster, in comparison of himself, should take the inheritance from him, and deriding him on that account, and that Hagar, Ishmael's mother, did countenance him at least therein, if she had not also tutored him to it; for she was to be cast out as well as he, which would not have been, if she had not been faulty. And we may remember, that formerly, as soon as she found she had conceived, she despised her mistress, chap. xvi. 4, which shews she was of a haughty temper.

Sarah could by no means brook that her bond-woman's boy should make sport with her son; therefore she was urgent with her husband, to turn them, both mother and son, out of doors, putting him in mind, that the bond-woman's son was not to be heir with her son Isaac. This was a hard pinch upon Abraham; for he loved his son Ishmael very much. But God made it easy to him, by counselling him to answer his wife's request, confirming what she had said, viz. that Isaac was to be his heir; and yet assuring him that he would take care of Ishmael for his sake, and would make a nation of him, because he was his seed.

Abraham, thus strengthened, got up betimes next morning; and lading Hagar with provisions, bread,

and a bottle of water, gave her the boy, and sent her away.

She going into the wilderness, which was afterwards called Beer-sheba,* wandered to and fro there until the water was spent; and seeing no hopes of relief, she concluded the lad would die with thirst; wherefore laying him under one of the shrubs (a low shady tree) she sat down herself at a little distance off, that she might not see him die: and when the child cried, and she wept, the angel of God called out of heaven to her, and to comfort her, bid her not fear, for God had heard the voice of the lad, and would make him a great nation. Then being directed to a well of water, she gave the lad drink, which refreshed him; and God provided for him. And they took up their abode in the wilderness of Paran, where he became an archer; by which employment, it is probable, he might get provisions for the sustenance of his mother and himself. And when he was grown to man's estate, his mother being herself an Egyptian, took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Meanwhile God being with Abraham, and visibly blessing him in all his undertakings, Abimelech king of Gerar being sensible thereof, took Phicol the general of his host with him, and came to Abraham, to enter into a strict league of friendship with him; for the king, observing how greatly Abraham prospered, was afraid, lest in time to come, as Abraham should grow more wealthy and powerful, he might attempt something to the prejudice of him or his successors in the government. Wherefore putting him in mind of the kindnesses he had shewed him since he came to sojourn in that land, (which see in Gen. xx. 14, 15, 16.) he desired Abraham to enter into a covenant with him, that he would not deal falsely with him, nor with his posterity; but would do unto him, and to the land in which he had been entertained, according to the kindness he had received from him.

* A. M. 2113.

This covenant he required him to confirm by an oath, which Abraham at his request did; and this being the first mention we have in story of an oath, or swearing, from the creation of man to that time, it is hence observable, that swearing was introduced by an heathen. The first that we read did ever urge an oath was a king of the Philistines.

The league thus made and confirmed between them, and a little difference composed about a well of water which Abraham had digged, and Abimelech's servants, without their master's knowledge, had forcibly taken from him, (which being now restored to Abraham, was thereupon called Beer-sheba, that is, The well of the Oath; because there they made their covenant, and each of them confirmed it to the other by oath) Abraham made a present to Abimelech of some sheep and oxen; and Abimelech with his general, taking their leave of him, returned home.

But Abraham intending to settle for some time in that country, planted a grove near the well in Beer-sheba, and there called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God. By which we may see how apt the customs of the places we live in, and of the people we converse with, are to steal and prevail even upon good men. By an heathen king, Abraham was just before drawn to swear; and from the heathen's practice he now plants a grove to perform his devotions in. For that it was the custom of the heathen to plant groves, and therein set their idols and altars, will appear from the command afterwards giving to Israel to destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves, *Exod. xxxiv. 13*, and to burn their groves with fire, *Deut. xii. 3*, and they were forbidden to plant any grove themselves to perform devotions in, *Deut. xvi. 21*. But when the kings of Israel departed from God, they set up groves; and it was one of king Ahab's provoking sins, that he made a grove, *1 Kings xvi. 33*. But though Abraham herein followed the custom of the Philistines amongst whom he lived, yet the object of his worship was the true God, Jehovah, the everlasting God.

Now came Abraham's greatest trial.* God, to prove his faithfulness, commands him to take his son, his only son now that Ishmael was gone, his son Isaac, the son of his joy, whom he loved so dearly, who had been conceived beyond the course of nature, and in whom God had promised that all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and to offer him for a burnt offering. Could any thing have been harder! But to make it easier, God sends him to do it in the land of Moriah, which signifies The Fear of God.... No place could have been more fit to bring man's will into a submissive compliance with the will of God.... Abraham, being well acquainted with the voice of the Lord, neither disputes nor delays; but early in the morning set forward on his journey, accompanied only with his son Isaac, and attended with two servants, who had an ass to carry the wood, and other instruments for the sacrifice, as well as provisions for themselves, having three days journey to go. For they went from the land of the Philistines about Gerar, and were to go into the land of Canaan, to the place where Jerusalem afterwards stood; for mount Moriah, where he was to offer his son, stood in Jerusalem, and Solomon built the temple upon it, where God commanded the offerings afterwards to be made, 2 Chron. iii. 1.

Having travelled two days, on the third they came within sight of the place; whereupon Abraham ordered his servants to tarry there with the ass, probably to prevent any disturbance they might give him, if they should see him go to kill his son, telling them he and his son would go thither to worship, and come to them again. From which words, compared with what the apostle says of him, that he accounted God was able to raise Isaac up, even from the dead, Heb. xi. 19, may be gathered, that Abraham had so steady a faith in God's power, that though he neither knew, nor expected any other, but that Isaac should certainly have been slain; yet he believed that God, who had so miraculously given him, and promised to make him a fa-

ther of many nations, would, to make good his promise, restore him to life again.

Abraham therefore laid the wood of the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulder, and himself carrying the fire and the knife, they two went out together. Little did Isaac yet think what he was going about; so that, as he was herein a type of the great offering, it might have been now said of him, as was afterwards said of Christ, he was led as a lamb to the slaughter. As thus they walked together, he very innocently said to his father, 'Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' To which his father prophetically replied, 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.'

Being come at length to the place which God had told him of, Abraham built an altar there, and having laid the wood in order, bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the altar upon the wood. Isaac, though according to the manner of speaking then used he was all along hitherto called a lad, is generally held to have been at that time at least three and thirty years of age, but by this computation should be seven and thirty, so that he was capable to have made resistance; but he quietly submitted, whether being then at last made acquainted by his father with God's command, or from a natural subjection yielding implicitly to whatsoever his father would do with him.

Now was Abraham's hand stretched forth, with the knife in it, ready to give the fatal stroke; when the angel of the Lord hastily called unto him out of heaven, and with a reduplication of his name, charged him not to lay his hand upon the lad to do him any harm; adding, 'For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.'

Abraham, hearing this voice, as he apprehended, behind him, turns about, and then sees a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, which he took and offered up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son, and called the place Jehovah-Jireth, which signifieth, The

Lord will see or provide; because the Lord, as Abraham had foretold he would, had provided himself a lamb for a burnt offering.

Hence arose a proverbial speech, in use long after; that when any one was entangled in an intricate matter, wherein he could not see his way clear, but must rely upon Providence, he would say, 'Well! in the mount of the Lord, the Lord will provide.'

Upon this complete obedience of Abraham's, it pleased the Lord to renew his promise to Abraham with great amplifications, and confirm it to him by oath; whereupon Abraham returning with his son Isaac to his servants, they travelled back again to Beer-sheba, the place at that time of Abraham's habitation.

How long after this he abode at Beer-sheba doth not appear, but it was not long before we find him at Kiriath-arba (afterwards called Hebron) in the land of Canaan; for there Sarah his wife died, in the one hundredth and seven and twentieth year of her age, which must be the seven and thirtieth of Isaac's; for she was ninety when he was born, Gen. xvii. 17.

Abraham, having mourned for his wife, addressed himself to the sons of Heth, that is, the Hittites, who being descended from Heth the son of Canaan, and grandson of cursed Ham, Gen. x. 6, 15, did then possess that region, to obtain from them a burying-place to bury his dead in. They, not understanding his intent, with great courtesy answered him, 'In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre.'

This would not do Abraham's business; he knew the Lord had called him forth from his idolatrous kindred, and from his father's house, Gen. xii. 1, and had given him the covenant of circumcision, chap. xvii. 9, 10, &c. whereby he had distinguished him and his seed from all other people; and that therefore it was not lawful for him to mix with any of the nations which did not worship the true God, and that truly. As therefore he afterwards took especial care that his son

might not marry with any of the daughters of the Canaanites; so now he was wary not to bury his dead promiscuously amongst theirs. He proposed therefore to buy a piece of ground of them for a peculiar place of sepulture for him and his family, and desired them to entreat Ephron their prince to sell him the cave of Machpelah, some little piece of ground that lay in the end of a field of Ephron's, letting them know he would give him for it as much as it was worth.

Ephron, it seems, though probably Abraham did not know it, was then present in the company; and having heard Abraham's proposal, very generously offered to give not only the cave, but the whole field also, that he might bury his dead without delay. But Abraham, not willing to come under such an obligation, or to have a precarious sepulchre, addressing himself then personally to prince Ephron, entreated him to sell him a piece of the field, and take money for it, and then he would bury his dead there. Ephron thereupon told him that the land was worth four hundred shekels of silver; but between persons of their rank he accounted that but a small matter, and therefore wished him not to make any more words about it, but accept the land, and bury his dead there without more ado.

Supposing the shekel here mentioned to be the common shekel, as being used before the law, and in a civil, not sacred case, it valued of our English money one shilling and three-pence. After which rate the four hundred shekels would amount to five and twenty pounds sterling.

Abraham, having got a price of the field, stood not to barter, or beat down the price; but forthwith paid the money to Ephron by weight. For in those early ages of the world, as they had money in bullion unstamped, so it passed by weight, rather than by tale; and a shekel had its name from shakel, which signifies to weigh, or put in the balance, says Godwyn, in his *Moses and Aaron*, l. 6. c. 10.

Upon payment of the money, the field of Ephron, and the cave that was in it, well abutted and bounded

with the mounds and fences, and the trees that were therein, and all and singular the hereditaments and appurtenances, were firmly conveyed and made sure to Abraham, and to his heirs forever in fee-simple; and then, and not till then, did Abraham bury his wife there.

About three years after this, Abraham, being an hundred and forty years old, was desirous to see his son Isaac, who was now forty years of age, married, and settled in the world before himself died;* wherefore calling his eldest servant to him, who was the steward over his house and whole estate, he gave him a strict charge, that he should not take a wife for his son Isaac of the daughters of the Canaanites, but should go into his (Abraham's) own country, and from thence bring a wife out of his own kindred for him; and to lay the greater bond upon his servant, he required him to take a solemn oath of fidelity to him in this case, the ceremony whereof was then performed, by the servant's putting his hand under his master's thigh; which, with some conditional and necessary cautions, he did.

Then having received his master's instructions and charge, he set forward with a handsome retinue of servants and camels, befitting his master's state, and the business he went about, and he directed his course to Haran, the city of Nahor, in Mesopotamia; for Abraham had heard, some time before, that his wife's sister Milcah, who was married to his brother Nahor, had borne him several children, one of which, named Bethuel, had a daughter named Rebekah, Gen. xxii. 20, &c.

The servant being come to Haran, caused his camels to rest themselves by a well of water without the city, it being evening time; about which time it was usual for the women to come forth of the city to draw water at that well.

Meantime he who had been religiously brought up, and instructed by his master Abraham in the fear of

God, and knew of how great a concern the business he went about was, had his mind retired and inwardly exercised in prayer to God, that 'the Lord, the God of his master Abraham, would speed his journey, and shew kindness to his master Abraham in giving him good success.' And being fearful lest in a matter of so great moment he should mistake the person, and so not make a right choice of a wife for his young master, he humbly besought the Lord to direct him by this sign, that when the city damsels should come out to draw water 'she of them all, who, upon his requesting her to let him drink out of her pitcher, should offer him to drink, and should say, I will give thy camels drink also, the same should be she whom the Lord had prepared and appointed for his servant Isaac.'

Scarce had he finished this inward request to the Lord (for inward it seems it was, ver. 45.) when behold Rebekah, Bethuel's fair daughter, came forth, with her pitcher or water-tankard on her shoulder, to fetch water.

Great, surely, was the simplicity and humility of those early ages, when persons of the upper rank, and of the female sex too, did not disdain to be employed in such low, but necessary offices. Thus, in the following age, Jacob found his cousin Rachel following and watering her father Laban's sheep. And for some ages after that, the seven daughters of Jethro, who was a prince, as well as priest of Midian, kept their father's flock, and used to draw water, and fill the troughs to water the flocks in,

Though Abraham was a mighty prince, (so the sons of Heth acknowledged, Gen. xxiii. 7.) yet his steward did not think Rebekah every whit the unfitter to make a wife for his master's son and heir, for her coming with her pitcher on her shoulder to draw and carry water.

Rebekah was a chaste virgin, and very beautiful, and Abraham's servant had soon his eye upon her, and diligently watched her motion. And when, hav-

ing been down at the well, she had filled her pitcher, and was come up again, he ran to meet her, and said, 'Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water out of thy pitcher.' She readily answered, drink, my lord; and nimbly letting her pitcher down upon her hand, gave him drink; and withal told him, she would draw water for his camels also; which he, that he might be fully confirmed by the sign he had desired, not refusing, she went to the well again, and drew for all his camels.

Meanwhile the man, attentively considering her, said nothing, but weighed the matter, to see whether she had fully answered the sign he had desired; and being satisfied that the Lord had thus far prospered his journey, so soon as the camels had done drinking, he presented her with a jewel for her head, and a pair of bracelets for her hands, of ten shekels weight of gold, which, at fifteen shillings the shekel, would amount to seven pounds ten shillings sterling.

He asked her also whose daughter she was, and whether there was room in her father's house for him and his company to lodge in. She told him she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor by Milcah; and withal assured him, that they had both room and accommodations for him and his camels. He said no more to her; but being deeply affected with a sense of the goodness of the Lord, in guiding him so directly to the house of his master's brethren, bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord, and breaking forth in praises to the Lord, said, 'Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth.'

While he was thus meditating on the kindness of the Lord, the damsel ran home, and told her relations what she had met with. She had a brother named Laban, who took the care of his father's business. He, when he had seen the bracelets on his sister's hands, and heard from her the account of what the man had said to her, immediately ran down to the

well; and saluting the man in the stile of, 'Thou blessed of the Lord,' an usual form of salutation in those times to such as they designed to shew more than ordinary respect to, invited him in, telling him there was preparation made for him and his camels. The man thereupon went in; and after his camels had been taken care of, and water brought for him and his men to wash their feet, supper being got ready, he was invited to eat. But he, intent on the business he came about, said, 'I will not eat, until I have told mine errand;' thereby giving a good example of faithfulness and diligence in a servant. Whereupon being bid to speak on, he said:

'I am Abraham's servant; and the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great.' Then having given a general account of his master's estate, he added: 'And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old, unto whom he hath given all that he hath. And my master, said he, made me swear, that I should not take a wife to his son of the daughters of the Canaanites; but should go unto his father's house, and to his kindred, and take a wife unto his son.' Then going on, he related to them the whole process of his journey, the manner of his meeting with Rebekah, and the divine guidance he had therein; concluding thus: 'And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left;' meaning, that they should not hold him in hand, but let him know their minds, whether they would bestow Rebekah on his master's son, or not; that if not, he might seek elsewhere.

Bethuel is supposed either to have been superannuated, or to labour under some bodily infirmity, which rendered him less capable of managing the affairs of his family; which may somewhat excuse his son Laban's forwardness: for it is said, Laban and Bethuel answered and said, 'The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot say any thing to it. Ask Rebekah herself: If she consent, take her, and let her be thy master's son's wife.'

In this we have a twofold example ; one for wooers, the other for parents. That which relates to wooers is, to ask and obtain the consent of parents, or other near relations first, before they propose the matter to the woman herself. That which relates to parents is, not to compel a child to match, either by threats, or importunate persuasion ; but having fairly opened the case, leave to the child a free liberty to consent or not, as affection or judgment, which ought to go together, shall incline.

No sooner had the servant received Bethuel's answer, but forthwith he makes his acknowledgment in a return of thanks to the Lord. Then making his presents, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment to Rebekah, with other precious things to her brother and mother, they went all to supper, and then to bed.

Next morning, as soon as they were up, he desires them to dispatch him back to his master. The brother and mother urge delay, no mention of the father, either here or with the presents ; which confirms the supposition, that he did not concern himself in business, but had turned all over to his wife and son. They were loth to part with Rebekah so soon ; would have her tarry with them a while ; but he, like a faithful and diligent servant, was for hastening home with her. 'Hinder me not, said he, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way ; send me away, that I may go to my master.'

Thereupon they refer the matter to Rebekah herself. 'We will call the damsel, said they, and inquire at her mouth.' She being called and asked, 'Wilt thou go with this man?' readily answered, 'I will go.' Wherein she is not to be taxed with immodesty or over forwardness, since there is no ground to doubt but she, as well as her relations, had a sense that the thing was of the Lord.

The scale thus turned for going, by her consent they send her away with Abraham's servant, having her nurse, whose name was Deborah, Gen. xxiii. 6,

and servant-maids to attend her. But they parted not until they had blessed her ; praying that she might be fruitful, and that her offspring might have dominion over their enemies.

It so fell out, or rather was ordered by Providence, that Isaac, walking out in the evening to meditate on the works and goodness of the Lord, saw his servants with the camels coming ; whereupon he went out to meet them. And Rebekah having espied him at some distance, and asked the steward who he was, being informed that it was his master, alighted from the camel on which she rode, and covered herself with a veil ; which, according to the custom of those countries, was a token of subjection, which she thereby declared she was willing to come under to him ; and it may pass for a periphrasis of being a wife. Isaac received Rebekah, brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, who had been dead about three years ; and afterwards he took her to be his wife, and loved her so well, that his love to her wrought off the grief he had conceived for the death of his mother.

Abraham had another wife, whose name was Keturah ; but whether he married her in Sarah's life-time, or after, is a question. Broughton says, after Sarah's death, Abraham married Keturah ; but inasmuch as she is expressly called his concubine, 1 Chron. i. 32, a term not usually given to such second wives as succeed others, but to such as in the life-time of the first, or former wife, are made partakers of the marriage-bed ; and considering also, that Abraham, who was an hundred and thirty-seven years of age when his wife Sarah died, had no less than six children by Keturah ; it gives occasion for others to suppose that he married her in Sarah's life-time.

But whensoever he married her, the sons which Abraham had by Keturah he gave portions to in his own life-time, and sent them away eastward into the east country ; which it is probable he did, that they might not stand in Isaac's way, nor settle in any part of the land of Canaan, which his seed by Isaac was to

inherit, that so Israel might not be under any necessity of dispossessing them, when in aftertimes they should come to take possession of the promised land.

Isaac, though he had been now married almost twenty years, had no issue by his fair wife. Wherefore he entreated the Lord for her, because she was barren; and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah conceived. But when she felt the children struggling together within her, for she had twins, it somewhat startled her, and made her wonder what the meaning of it might be; wherefore she went to inquire of the Lord, which in those times was usually done by consulting some prophet; and her father-in-law Abraham being a prophet, (so he is expressly called by God himself, Gen. xx. 7.) and being then alive, it is most probable that she inquired by him. However, the answer was, 'Two nations (that is, the heads of fathers of two nations) are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: the one of these people shall be stronger than the other; and the elder shall serve the younger.' This did not hold of those two children in their own persons; for the younger stood always in fear of the elder. But in their posterities it did; and it was completed in David's time, when he put garrisons throughout all Edom, (Esau is Edom) Gen. xxxvi. 8, and all they of Edom became David's servants, 2 Sam. viii. 14.

At the birth of these two children, the eldest came forth red,* and hairy all over like a hairy garment, and they called him Esau. His brother followed him so close at the heels, that he took hold of his heel with his hand; and he was called Jacob. This was twenty years after Isaac's marriage, and in the sixtieth year of his age.

As they grew up, Esau spent his time much in the fields, addicting himself to hunting; and because he furnished his father with venison, a sort of food he delighted in, his father loved him best. But Jacob

* A. M. 2163.

was a plain man, dwelling in tents, that is, minding the family-business at home, and being by that means more conversant with his mother, and ready at hand to wait upon her, she loved him best.

When the boys were about fifteen years of age, their grandfather Abraham gave up the ghost,* being an hundred seventy and five years old, and was buried by his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, in the cave of Machpelah, in the field which he had purchased of the sons of Heth, and where he had buried Sarah his wife about forty years before.

Ishmael, Abraham's eldest son, though not his heir, lived many years after this, till he had attained to be an hundred and seven and thirty years old; and then leaving, as was predicted of him, Gen. xvii. 20, twelve sons, who were all princes of nations, possessed of towns and castles, he also gave up the ghost. And although he had been such a wild man, that his hand had been against every man, and every man's hand against him, Gen. xvi. 12, yet he died at last in the presence of his brethren, that is, a natural death, having his family and relations about him.

But before that, Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob, were grown up to man's estate;† and Esau one day, having spent his spirits and strength in hunting, came faint from the field, just as Jacob had sod some pottage of lentiles (a kind of pulse somewhat like our vetches, or coarsest sort of peas) and it was of a red colour.... Esau soon had his eager eye upon the broth; and being greedy through hunger, desired his brother to feed him with that red, red; not knowing what else to call it, and doubling the word through eagerness and haste, which gave him the nick-name Edom, signifying not only earthy, but blood-red; and as a motive to persuade him, he told him he was faint.

Jacob, plain though he was, knew this was the time to get a good bargain; and therefore, intending to work his own advantage from his brother's necessity, asked him forthwith to sell him his birth-right.

* A. M. 2123.

† A. M. 2138.

The birth-right, or right of primogeniture, had many and great privileges annexed to it. The first-born was consecrated to the Lord, Exod. xxii. 29, was next in honour and dignity to the parents, Gen. xlix. 3, had a double portion allotted to him, Deut. xxi. 17, and succeeded in the government of the family or kingdom, 2 Chron. xxi. 3, and therefore was a matter of the highest regard.

Esau, either not considering, or not duly regarding any of these, but consulting his own present need and appetite only, slightly answered, 'Behold, I am ready to die, and what good shall this birth-right do me?'

Jacob, finding him so indifferent, was willing to bind the bargain, and make sure of it; and therefore presently urged him to confirm the birth-right to him by an oath. Esau, as readily consenting, sold his birth-right, with all those excellent privileges that depend on it, to his brother Jacob for a mess of pottage; and this in Esau is called despising his birth-right.

After this, there was a famine in that part of the land where Isaac lived; which made him think of removing. And while he deliberated whither to go, or where to settle, whether in Egypt or among the Philistines, the Lord appeared to him, and charged him not to go down into Egypt, but to sojourn in that land where he should direct him; promising to be with him and bless him, and assuring him that he would give all those countries to him and his seed, in performance of the oath which he had sworn unto Abraham his father; and that he would cause his seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and all nations to account themselves blessed therein, because of the faith and obedience of Abraham.

Isaac, therefore, by divine direction, went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, and dwelt, as his father had formerly done, at Gerar. And here the same temptation attended him, that attended his father in the same place before.

Rebekah was very beautiful, and Isaac was afraid the Philistines would kill him for her sake. He therefore, when they asked him what she was to him, not daring to own her for his wife, told them she was his sister; which was then a common appellation amongst kindred in almost any degree. But as watchful Providence prevented her being then taken from him; so sometime after the king himself, looking out at a window, observed Isaac behaving himself so familiarly towards Rebekah, as gave him ground to suspect she was his wife, not his sister only. Wherefore calling Isaac to him, he confidently told him she was certainly his wife; which Isaac not knowing how to deny, the king first blamed him for laying such a snare before his people, saying, 'What is this thou hast done? One of the people might have chanced to have lain with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us;' and then gave a charge, on pain of death, to all his people, that none of them should harm him or his wife.

Isaac, by this protection encouraged to tarry there longer, applied himself to husbandry; and having sowed some land in that country, reaped a crop the same year of an hundred fold. By which, and the Lord's continual blessing him, he increased to that degree of wealth and greatness, being possessed of flocks and herds, and having great store of servants, that the Philistines began to envy him, and their king desired him to remove from them; for, said he, thou art much mightier than we.

Isaac thereupon departed from thence; and the rather, for that the Philistines, to make his stay uneasy to him, had stopped up all the wells, which his father's servants had digged in the time of his father's abode there formerly, and had filled them with earth. Wherefore removing into the valley of Gerar, he pitched his tent, and dwelt there; but before he went, he opened again the wells of water that had been digged in his father's time, and which the Philistines had stopped

up after his father's death, calling them by the names which his father had given them.

Being thus settled in the valley, his servants digged a well there, and found a spring of water that continually flowed. But when the herdsmen of Gerar knew of it, they claimed the well, pretending it was theirs; and though Isaac's servants had both found it, and digged it, yet these herdsmen strove with them for it.... Wherefore Isaac called that well Esek, which signifies contention; and being a peaceable man, willing to live quietly, he let that well go, and ordered his servants to dig another. They did so; and when they had found water, the herdsmen strove for that too; whereupon he called that well Sitnah, which signifies hatred. From those two names we may observe, how apt contention is to lead to hatred; and thereupon take this caution:

Seek peace, and prize it; but contention shun,
Lest Esek do at length to Sitnah run.

Weary of such quarrelsome neighbours, Isaac removed further from them, and then digged another well; and because he enjoyed that without strife, he called it Rehoboth, which signifies room; for now, said he, the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

Yet tarried he not long there, but went up from thence to Beer-sheba; where the Lord the same night appearing to him, comforted and encouraged him, and renewed his promise to him, to bless him, and to multiply his seed for his servant Abraham's sake.

Isaac therefore, building an altar there, worshipped the Lord; and because he designed to make some stay there, his servants digged a well; for in those hot and dry countries water was much wanted.

Meanwhile Abimelech, king of the Philistines, remembering how unkindly he had dismissed Isaac, ver. 16, and what squabbles had afterwards happened between their servants striving for water, and not know-

ing how Isaac might resent it, thought it adviseable, for preventing future dangers, to make a visit to Isaac, and try if he could draw him into a league of amity and firm friendship. Taking therefore Ahuzzath, one of his friends, to be, if need were, a mediator between them, and Phichol, captain general of his forces, he went to Isaac at Beer-sheba.

Isaac, that he might shew them he was sensible of the injuries done him, and withal, not yet knowing the intent of their coming, gave them at first but a cold reception; asking, wherefore they came to see him, seeing they hated him, and had sent him away from them? They answered smoothly, 'We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee; and we said, let there be an oath betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt; as (added they, to smooth over the matter) we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace;' concluding with that kind and pleasing compellation, 'Thou blessed of the Lord.'

When Isaac understood the business they came about, he, who was of a quiet and gentle temper, and desirous of peace, (as having more cause to fear hurt from them than they from him) entertained them courteously and liberally; and next morning betimes they made a league, confirming it by mutual oath. After which, he having accommodated them for their journey, they took their leave of him and departed.

The last we heard of Esau, was the selling of his birth-right;* the next we hear of him, is his grieving his godly parents by his ungodly marriages. He was now forty years of age; and having never been good, and now, since his slighting of his birth-right, grown worse, though he could not be ignorant of the care his grandfather took, that his father might not marry into an idolatrous family; yet nothing would serve his turn, but to take two Hittites, Judith and Bashemath, to be his wives.

These Hittites descended from Heth, the son of Canaan, and grandson of Ham, Gen. x. 5, 16, and Esau must marry these Hittite women, either without the knowledge and consent of his parents, which was bad; or against their express prohibition, which was worse. However it was, these Hittite marriages were such a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah that it is said to be a bitterness of spirit unto them. And so indeed must all such mungrel-marriages be to all godly parents.

Yet see how prevalent natural affection was with this good man. For after this, when he was grown old, and his sight was gone, he called his son Esau to him;* and putting him to consider that he was old, and his life uncertain, wished him to take his bow and arrows, and go hunt some venison, and make him a savoury dish thereof, such as he knew he loved, and bring it him, that he might eat thereof, and might give him the blessing appendant to the birth-right before he died.

Thus good Isaac, overswayed by a fond affection to a disobedient and graceless son, would have preferred the order of nature to the divine will of God, who had expressly declared, before the children were born, that the elder should serve the younger. But God would not suffer his purpose to be so disappointed; and therefore, being unwilling to deal hardly with Isaac, he permitted him to be imposed upon by his wife and younger son, and thereby drawn to do that unwittingly, which to have done knowingly, would have been very uneasy to him.

It so fell out, that Rebekah overheard what her husband had said to his son Esau. Wherefore, when Esau was gone to hunting, she called her son Jacob to her; and having related to him what she heard his father say to his brother, she first in a general way enjoined him that he should punctually observe her directions. Then in particular bid him go to the flock, and fetch from thence two good kids of the goats; and with them,

said she, will I make savoury meat for thy father, such as he loves ; and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and may bless thee before his death.

Jacob had gotten the birth-right already, and knew that the paternal blessing did usually attend it ; but he was fearful, lest, if he should attempt to get it by such indirect means, he should lose the blessing, and get a curse instead of it : for he considered, that his brother being all over hairy, and he smooth, if his father, to supply his defect of sight by feeling, should handle him, he might easily discover him ; and this he objected to his mother. But she having continually kept in remembrance the words of the Divine Oracle, ‘The elder shall serve the younger,’ Gen. xxv. 23 ; confidently answered him, ‘upon me be thy curse, my son, only obey my voice,’ and without delay go fetch me the kids.

Jacob disputed no further, but went and brought her the kids, with which she made savoury meat, such as she knew her husband loved. Then dressing up Jacob in Esau’s best clothes, which she, it seems, had the keeping of, or could come at, and fastening the hairy skins of the kids upon his hands, and the smooth parts of his neck, for in those hot countries men went bare-necked ; she put the dish of meat into his hand, and sent him with it to his father.

As soon as Isaac heard his voice, he asked, Who art thou, my son ? (meaning which of my sons art thou) Jacob answered, I am Esau, thy first-born. By which it is probable he meant, that he did represent Esau, or stood in the place of Esau the first-born, by virtue of the purchase he had made of the primogeniture or birth-right of his brother Esau.

Isaac, wondering that he had made such haste, asked him, how it came to pass that he had found and taken the venison so quickly : he replied, ‘Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.’ Meaning, peradventure, that the Lord had put that invention or contrivance of the kids into his mother’s mind, and by her hand brought it to him.

Isaac, not willing to trust to his hearing only, called Jacob to come near him, that, saith he, I may feel thee, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. Jacob thereupon went to him; and the poor old man, deprived of sight, when he had felt Jacob's hands, being deceived by the hairy kids'-skins, could not ascertain himself, whether it was Jacob or Esau; but shewed his uncertainty, by saying, 'The voice is Jacob's voice; but the hands are the hands of Esau.' Having therefore no other way to attain satisfaction, but the veracity of his son, he put the question more close and home to him, 'art thou my very son Esau?' To which Jacob answering, 'I am,' the old man urged no further, but taking him indeed for Esau, bid him bring near the meat, that he might eat of his venison, and his soul might bless him.

Jacob was not backward to do that, but brought the food near to him; of which when he had eaten, he brought him wine also, and he drank. After which Isaac bid him come near, and kiss him; which while Jacob did, his father smelled the smell not only of the kids'-skins, but of the raiment he had on.

Upon smelling the raiment, he began to pour forth his blessing upon Jacob, saying, 'See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field, which the Lord hath blessed. Therefore God give thee the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee. Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee. Cursed be every one that curseth thee; and blessed be he that blesseth thee.'

Very concise are the terms of this blessing, but very full and extensive is the matter contained therein; and, like an heavenly-minded man, he begins his blessing with an appreciation of heavenly things, signified by the 'dew of heaven.' After which follows the fatness of the earth, producing plenty of corn and wine; under which two general heads, are, by a synec-

doche, comprehended all necessary conveniences and accommodations for the being and well-being of human life. Then follows power and dominion, both general over people and nations; and particular over his brethren, the sons of his mother. Under which expression, by an over-ruling Providence, Isaac was made unwittingly to confirm to Jacob the birth-right, before by private contract transferred from Esau to him.

Thus Jacob obtained the blessing; but by such ways and means, as if they may be excused in him, or he in using them, on the account that God had appointed the blessing to him; yet are they not to be imitated, or drawn into example by any other: which they may do well to consider, who propose the whole Scripture, and every part thereof without distinction, for a standing rule of both faith and practice to all believers in all times.

Scarce was Jacob got clear off from his father's presence, when in came his brother Esau from hunting, who, having caught some venison, and dressed it fit for his father's palate, brought it in with him; and little thinking what had passed between his father and his brother, very cheerfully said to his father, 'Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.'

This startled Isaac, who thereupon hastily asked, 'Who art thou?' To which Esau replying, 'I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau;' a very great trembling seized upon Isaac, and brought upon him a perturbation of mind; so that he called out, 'Who, where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me; and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him?' And, being by this time sensible of a divine ordering hand therein, he added, 'Yea, and he shall be blessed.'

At that word Esau cried out most bitterly; and having no hopes to prevail with his father to reverse the blessing given to his brother, he cried, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father.'

Isaac, to excuse himself to him for having given the blessing from him, told him, 'Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken thy blessing from thee.' 'Ah,' said Esau, (playing upon his brother's name, which signifies a supplanter) 'is he not rightly named Jacob? For he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birth-right before; and behold now he hath taken away my blessing.' Thus an offended mind is apt to overcharge; for Jacob did not take away his birth-right. He only asked him to sell it; and Esau, not regarding it, sold it him for a trifle.

But Esau, applying himself again to his father, said, 'Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?' Isaac wanted not good will to him; but he had emptied the chief of his store upon Jacob. 'I have made him thy lord, (said Isaac to Esau) and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?' 'Alas!' said Esau, 'Hast thou but that one blessing? Bless me, me also, O my father.' And with that, he not only cried out aloud, but wept also.

Of this, long after, the author to the Hebrews took notice, Heb. xii. 16, 17, where, having branded Esau with profaneness, in despising his birth-right, and selling it for a morsel of meat, he observes that, when afterwards he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for though he sought it (the blessing) carefully, and with tears, yet he found no place of repentance in his father. Neither prayers nor tears could prevail with Isaac to revoke the blessing he had, by divine appointment, given to Jacob; 'I have blessed him,' said he, 'yea, and he shall be blessed.'

Yet, that he might somewhat pacify Esau, and do as well for him as he could, he at length tells him, 'His dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.' In which words, besides the inverting of the order of the words and things, the earthly, the fatness of the earth, being here to the earthly man set first; whereas the dew of

heaven was set first to Jacob, the heavenly man. This which is said to Esau looks more like a prediction of what would befall him, than an appreciation that they might befall him. To Jacob it was said, 'God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth,' &c. But to Esau, 'Thy dwelling-place shall be of the fatness of the earth,' &c. And whereas power and sovereignty, not only over Esau and his posterity, but more generally over people and nations, is wished to Jacob: Esau is told, that he should live by his sword, (which is but an unquiet, uneasy, unsafe course of life) and should serve his brother; which must needs be a cut to him. But, for his comfort, it is prophetically added, that he in his posterity should, at one time or other, have a dominion also; and that then they should break his brother's yoke from off their neck; which was attempted, and begun in king Joram's time, 2 Kings viii. 20, 22, but not completely and fully fulfilled till king Herod's time, who was an Edomite.

Esau regarded not the birth-right, which led to the blessing; but the blessing he was very earnest to have gotten. Thus some men are desirous of attaining the end, but neglect the means which lead to that end.

Now when Esau saw that his brother Jacob had got the blessing from him, he hated him for it; and supposing his father would not live long, he resolved, that, as soon as his father should be dead, he would slay his brother. Of which his unnatural purpose Rebekah being informed, she called her son Jacob to her, and having acquainted him with his brother's threats, wished him by any means to make a visit to his uncle Laban at Haran, and tarry with him a while, until his brother's fury should be assuaged; which she would observe, and then send for him home again.

Jacob being of a mild, and probably somewhat fearful nature, and knowing Esau's rough temper, would easily comply with a proposal tending to his own safety; but to go without his father's consent would not do well; and how to get the old man's consent was the difficulty. Rebekah therefore took an opportunity,

when her husband and she were together, politicly to complain of the uneasiness she was under on the account of their son Esau's Hittite wives ; and the fear she had, lest his example should lead their son Jacob to do the like, ' I am weary of my life,' said she to her husband, ' because of the daughters of Heth, (meaning Esau's wives) if (added she) Jacob should take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of this land, what good shall my life do me ?'

Though Isaac knew not the ground nor drift of this complaint, yet being a devout and pious man, and knowing that the promise made to Abraham, and renewed to him, was to be fulfilled in the seed of Jacob ; and being therefore careful that he should not corrupt his seed, by mixing with any of those nations which were to be destroyed, he forthwith called Jacob to him, and, together with his fatherly blessing, gave him a strict charge that he should not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but should go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, his mother's father ; and from thence take him a wife of the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. ' And God Almighty,' said he, to encourage him, ' bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude, (or an assembly rather) of people ; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.'

Thus Isaac sent away Jacob, just as his mother and he had desired and contrived ; and away towards Padan-aram goes Jacob.

Now when Esau saw that his father had confirmed the blessing to his brother Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence ; and that, as he blessed him, he charged him not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob, in obedience to his parents, was gone towards Padan-aram, collecting from thence, that his father was dis-

pleased with him for having taking those Hittite wives, who were of the daughters of Canaan; and thinking to reingratiate himself with his father, he went and took Mahalath, his uncle Ishmael's daughter, to be his wife, which mended the matter but little.

Jacob now travelling towards Padan-aram, and being benighted on the way, was fain to lodge abroad in a certain place, Providence so disposing it. Wherefore lying down on the ground, and laying his head upon a stone, he fell asleep; and in his sleep dreamed that he saw a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven; and upon it were the angels of God ascending and descending. Above it stood the Lord, and said to him, 'I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' And to comfort and encourage him to go on his journey, he added, 'And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places where thou goest; and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.'

Jacob hereupon awaking out of his sleep, and having the matter of his dream imprinted on his mind, said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.' And this being, so far as appears, the first time that God had so immediately appeared to him, a reverential awe fell upon him; and being afraid, he brake forth into admiration, saying, 'How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God; and this is the gate of heaven!' For though at first he had not well enough considered the omnipresence of God, yet here he well observed, that where God doth vouchsafe so to manifest himself, that is his house.... Getting up therefore early in the morning, he took the stone, which he had put for his pillow, and set it up

for a pillar, both as a monument of God's love to him, in so eminently appearing, and confirming his gracious promises to him ; and as a mark to know the place by afterwards, whenever he should come that way again.

Having set up the stone, he poured oil upon the top of it. And this being the first mention we have of oil, either as to use, thing, or name, it seems more reasonable that he used it here, and so afterwards, Gen. xxxv. 14, in a way of religious consecration : and that rather by a divine instinct, and secret direction from God, than by imitation or example from either his father or grandfather ; which some think he did. For if either Abraham or Isaac had used oil in any of their religious performances, it may well be thought there would have been some mention of it before ; whereas I find it not so much as named till now, nor after this, save once, when Jacob, returning from Padan-aram to this place again, poured out oil on a pillar then, as he had done now, until God in the law appointed the use of it in consecrations, and in offerings, &c. Which ceremony, says one, signified these two things ; one, that Christ was anointed, and consecrated to his office of mediator, with fulness of the Holy Ghost ; secondly, that the anointing of the Spirit is that which makes us, and all our service, acceptable to God....Wilson's Christian Dictionary, *verbo* oil.

The place where Jacob had this heavenly vision, which was called Luz before, he now called Beth-el, that is, the house of God. And before he went from thence, repeating some part of what the Lord had said to him, he vowed a vow, the more strongly to bind himself to the Lord's service, saying, ' If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace ; then shall the Lord be my God ; and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house, or, in the place where I have set up this pillar will I worship God, and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.'

This is the second mention of tythes or tenths, and the first vow concerning them ; made voluntarily, and expressed in the terms of giving them, and that not to man, but to God. How or when it was performed, no man knows ; but most think it was by an offering unto God when Jacob built an altar at El-bethel, and set up a pillar in the place where God had talked with him, and poured a drink-offering, and oil thereon, at his return from Padan-aram, Gen. xxxv. 7, 14.

Jacob having thus performed his devotions, and being much encouraged by the vision he had seen in his sleep, went cheerfully on his journey, till he came into Mesopotamia. And looking about as he walked, he saw a well in a field, and three flocks of sheep lying by it : for out of that well the flocks were wont to be watered. And because the mouth of the well was covered with a great stone ; the manner was, that when all the flocks were gathered together, the shepherds, joining all their strength, rolled away the stone ; and when they had watered the sheep, they put the stone again upon the mouth of the well.

Jacob straightway makes up to them, and saluting them, with the courteous compellation of brethren, asked them whence they were ? They answering, of Haran ; he asked them, if they knew Laban, and how he did ; they tell him, he was well ; and that that was his daughter Rachel, who was coming towards them with the sheep.

By that time they had done their discourse, Rachel was come up to them with her father's sheep ; for she kept them. As soon as Jacob saw Rachel, he rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered her sheep ; which done, he told her who he was, and saluting her with a kiss, he lift up his voice and wept for joy. Rachel leaving him there, hasted home, and told her father whom she had met with. And as soon as Laban heard that Jacob, his sister's son, was come to see him, he ran to meet him, and having embraced and kissed him, he brought him home with him.

Jacob soon after gave his uncle an account of what had happened betwixt his brother Esau and him, as the cause of his coming from home; and of the vision he had had in his sleep on the way. All which was necessary for Laban to understand, both to prevent any suspicion that he had misbehaved himself at home, or left his parents without their consent or direction, seeing he came so bare and unattended; and also to make him sensible, that the Lord had taken upon himself the protection and care of him. And accordingly Laban, when he had heard the account he gave, acknowledging him to be his near kinsman, gave him a kind reception.

When Jacob had now been with his uncle Laban the space of a month, and had entered himself in his uncle's business, as intending to make some stay with him, his uncle taking an opportunity to discourse with him, let him know he did not expect, nor think it reasonable, that because he was a near relation, he should serve him for nothing; and therefore desired him to tell him what wages he would have.

Rachel was Laban's younger daughter; but being beautiful and well-favoured, whereas her sister Leah was tender-eyed; Jacob was in love with Rachel; and therefore told his uncle, he would serve him seven years for his younger daughter Rachel. To which Laban, as well he might, consenting, Jacob entered his first apprenticeship, or seven years' service, which, for the great love he bore Rachel, seemed to him but a few days.

When he had served up his time, he desired his uncle (who was now to be his father-in-law) to give him his wife. Laban thereupon, that the marriage might be openly solemnized, made a feast, and invited his neighbours. And being desirous for his own advantage to detain Jacob still in his service, he dealt not fairly with Jacob, but beguiled him; for in the evening, he 'took Leah, and brought her to Jacob's bed instead of Rachel.' And it being the custom of the country, that the bride, on pretence of

modesty and shame-facedness, should be covered with a veil when she was brought to the bridegroom, Jacob by that means was deceived, not discerning that it was Leah till next morning.

Next morning, when he found the abuse, he complained of it to Laban, who put it off with a slender excuse, alledging, that it was not the manner of that country to give the younger in marriage before the elder; which, if it had been true, he should have acquainted Jacob with it before they had contracted.

Laban, knowing the great affection Jacob bare to Rachel, needed not doubt but the hopes of having her too would bind him to stay longer with him, which was the thing he much desired. But he seemed afraid, lest Jacob, in resentment of the injury done him, should throw off Leah, and not receive her for his wife. Wherefore, in gentle terms, he intreats him to fulfil her week; and then, said he, 'we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.'

By week here, some understand a week of years, or seven years; and that to fulfil her week, he was to serve up the other seven years before he should have Rachel. But others with better reason conclude, that by fulfilling her week, was intended that he should openly acknowledge Leah for his wife, by keeping the marriage festival seven days together, according to the manner of those times in that country, and at the end of the week should marry Rachel, and serve the seven years for her afterwards. This appears to be the right sense of the place by the order of the story. For though Jacob was with Laban twenty years, Gen. xxxi. 28, and 41, yet at the end of the fourteenth year Jacob proposed to part and return home. But Rachel had born Joseph before that, Gen. xxx. 25, and besides had been married a good while before she bare Joseph; and had had two sons by her maid Bilhah, which could not have been, if she had not been married before the end of his second seven years.

Jacob, consenting to Laban's proposal, fulfilled Leah's week, and then married Rachel; to whom his love went forth so much more than to Leah, that Leah comparatively was said to be hated. But the Lord pitying Leah made her fruitful, and restrained Rachel from bearing; so that Leah bare Jacob four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, before Rachel had one.

This troubled Rachel sorely, so that she emulated her sister; and being blinded through her too earnest desire of children, she saw not the hand of the Lord in it, but imputing her want of children to her husband; and giving away to her discontent, she vented her passion upon him, saying unadvisedly to him, 'Give me children, or I die.'

Though Jacob loved her entirely, yet here his judgment prevailed over his affection. And though he was naturally of a gentle and mild temper, yet these rash and unadvised words of Rachel, warmed him to that degree, that it is said, 'his anger was kindled against her;' which he vented in this short but sharp reproof, 'Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?'

By this check, brought to a better consideration of the matter, and hopeless of issue to match her sister, Rachel bethinks herself of another way; and therefore deals with her husband, in like manner as his grand-mother Sarah had dealt in somewhat a like case, with her husband Abraham. Laban, when he bestowed his daughters in marriage, gave each of them a maid to wait on her. Leah's maid was named Zilpah; and Rachel's Bilhah. Rachel therefore, having first discoursed, and agreed the matter with her husband, gives him her maid Bilhah for an under-wife or concubine; reckoning with herself, that what children he should have by her maid should be hers, for she would account them as her own, and would take the care of, cherish and bring them up, as if she had been their mother.

This is meant by those expressions, 'she shall bear upon my knees,' and 'that I may also have children by her,' ver. 3. And accordingly when Bilhah soon after bare Jacob a son, Rachel claims him, takes him for her own, rejoices that God had given her a son, and gives him his name Dan. Bilhah bears Jacob a second son, which also Rachel takes as her own; and calls him Naphtali.

When Leah saw this, doubting her sister would by this means get the better of her, she thought she might use her sister's policy; and supposing that she herself had given over child bearing, she gave her husband her maid Zilpah to wife; Zilpah brought Jacob a son; which Leah taking, cried 'A troop comes;' and thereupon called the boy Gad. Zilpah brings another son, which Leah, now thinking herself happy, called Asher.

Her eldest son Reuben was by this time grown big enough to run about in the fields, where he found some pretty flowers that had a pleasant smell, which he brought home to his mother. What sort of flowers they were is undeterminable: they are rendered Mandrakes; which is an herb whose root is said to have the likeness of a man. But some critics give reasons to shew that these could not be that: whatever they were, Rachel seeing them, had a great desire after them; and therefore prayed her sister to give her some of them.

The emulation that was between the two rival sisters had so far broken their kindness to each other, that there was not a good correspondence between them: so that Leah, thinking Rachel had too great a share in her husband's affection, and forgetting, or not rightly considering, that her sister, not herself, was Jacob's choice, and that she was but a kind of interloper to her sister, answers her somewhat churlishly, and in an upbraiding manner; 'Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband,' said she to Rachel, 'and wouldst thou take away my son's flowers also?'

Though Rachel could have retorted, and wanted not sharpness, yet having a mind to the flowers, she would not contend, but rather propose terms of agreement. Whereas therefore, in course, Jacob was to have been Rachel's bed-fellow that night; she tells her sister, that if she will give her some of the flowers, she shall enjoy his company that night. Leah liking the terms, they agree upon it, and Leah went out in the evening to meet him at his return from the field; and having acquainted him with the terms of their bargain, invites him to her apartment, and his company that night.

Upon this, Leah conceiving again, brought forth her fifth son, which she named Issachar, because he was the fruit of her hire. And in time conceiving again, she had a sixth son, whom she named Zebulun; and at last bare to Jacob the only daughter we read he had, whose name was Dinah.

Hitherto Rachel had no issue of her own body; but now it pleased God to remember her, and at length hearkened to her request, and gave her a son: whereupon rejoicing that God had taken away her reproach, (for so was barrenness then accounted) and predicting that the Lord would add to her another son, she called the name of this boy Joseph.

Soon after Joseph was born, Jacob having served up his last seven years service, began to think of returning into his own country. Wherefore putting his father-in-law in mind, that the time for which he had contracted to serve was now expired; he desired him to deliver him his wives and children, and send him away.

This was displeasing discourse to Laban: wherefore, acknowledging the benefits he had received by Jacob's being with him, and that he was sensible the Lord had blessed him for his sake, he earnestly entreated him to tarry still with him; offering to give him whatsoever he would ask for his wages.

Jacob letting him know that he was also sensible that the Lord had blessed him since his coming to him, and

how greatly the little stock he had before was increased, wished him to consider if it was not time for him, who had now a dozen children, to make some provision for his own family.

But Laban, not willing to hear of parting with him, still pressed him with, 'What shall I give thee?' Jacob overcame by Laban's importunity, told him he should not give him any thing; but if he liked the terms he should offer him, he would continue in his service, to feed and keep his flock still. Which terms were these: that 'they should pass through the whole flock, both of sheep and goats, and draw out all the spotted, speckled, brown and ring-streaked cattle, from those that were only white; and removing them to a convenient distance one from the other, Laban's sons should take the charge of the spotted flock; and he of the white only.' And then, whatsoever spotted or speckled cattle, or brown among the sheep, or spotted or speckled among the goats, should after that time come forth out of the white flock, which he was to keep, that should be his hire. Thus he reckoned he should depend upon Providence for his wages; and there would be no occasion of difference between his father-in-law and him about it.

Laban was overjoyed at the proposition; and forthwith closing with it, they went out and parted the flocks accordingly; and delivering the spotted cattle to Laban's sons, and the rest to Jacob to keep, that he might be sure there should be no intercourse between them, to cause mixtures of the cattle, he set them three days journey asunder.

Now did God remember Laban's unrighteous dealing with Jacob; how he deceived him in his marriage, giving him Leah instead of Rachel; and how, out of a covetous desire to serve himself upon him, he had contrived ways to detain him in his service. God takes from Laban the riches he had before given him for Jacob's sake, and bestows it on Jacob; and that in such a manner, as Laban could neither help himself, nor justly find fault with Jacob.

For Jacob, having his understanding opened by a divine wisdom, took rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut-trees, and peeling off the rind in strakes, made the white to appear in the rods. Then setting the rods, which he had so peeled, in the watering troughs, when the flocks came to drink and saw the speckled rods, they brought forth cattle ring-streaked, speckled and spotted : all which he set before the white cattle, that they, looking upon them, might conceive such. And he took especial care to lay his rods before the stronger and lustier cattle, that they might bring forth spotted ones for him ; but before the weak and feeble cattle he did not lay his rods, but left them to bring forth cattle unto Laban. By this artifice, not only the greater number of the cattle brought forth to Jacob, but his were much the abler and the stronger. And thus his substance increased exceedingly, not in small cattle only, but in camels also and asses ; and he had withal a great family of servants.

Laban, seeing Jacob's prosperity, was not so glad of the terms before, when Jacob proposed them, as he was now uneasy under them ; and being a selfish man, not thoroughly seasoned with a principle of justice, he flew off from his bargain ; and had, it seems, ere this, several times altered the terms of it ; which Jacob, for quietness sake, suffered, though uneasily. But which way soever Laban turned it, he still had the worst of it. For if he said, the speckled shall be thy wages, then all the cattle bare speckled ; and if he said, the ring-streaked shall be thy hire, then all the cattle bare ring-streaked ; God so disposing it, to impoverish Laban, and enrich Jacob, whom Laban designed to enrich himself by.

Jacob had now been twenty years in Laban's service ; whereof he served fourteen years for his two wives, and six years for cattle. And now he happened to overhear his brothers-in-law, Laban's sons, grumbling and complaining that he had taken all that was their father's, and had raised to himself a fair estate out of it. He observed also, that Laban him-

self was grown cold and indifferent towards him ; and did not carry so kindly to him, as he had formerly done. This made him think of leaving Laban's service, and returning to his father Isaac. But then the Lord appearing to him, and bidding him ' return to his kindred, and to the land of his fathers ; this brought his thought into resolution ; only he considered, that it was necessary he should impart his purpose first unto his wives, and draw them to a consent ; that they might not hang back, and thereby hinder his journey. Wherefore he sent for them both to come to him in the field ; both that he might not leave his flocks, and that he might discourse with them about it with more freedom and privacy.

When they were come to him, he told them he had observed that their father's countenance and carriage was changed of late, and was not now towards him as it had formerly been ; though he could appeal to their own knowledge, both concerning his faithfulness and diligence in his service, and their father's unfair dealing with him, in deceiving him, and changing his wages so often as he had done. He told them also, that God would not suffer their father to hurt him ; but had turned all his contrivances against him to his advantage, and had taken away their father's cattle, and had given them to him. And having related to them how, and for what reason, God had done this, he then let them know, that the Lord had lately appeared to him, and had put him in mind of the pillar he had anointed, and of the vow he had made to him at Beth-el, in his passage from Canaan thither, of which, at his first coming to Laban, he had given them a relation, and that the Lord had now commanded him to get him out from this land, and to return to the land of his kindred.

Rachel and Leah having attentively heard what their husband had said to them, let him know, they also had observed that their father was estranged from them, and sought to make advantages to himself by them : and were sensible that the Lord had taken their fa-

ther's riches from him, and given it to them, and therefore they might, without injury to him, remove both themselves and their substance. Wherefore assuring him, that they were willing and ready to go with him; they desired him to prepare for the journey. Jacob thereupon, having got all things in readiness, mounting his wives and children upon camels, set forward with all his cattle and goods, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

It so fell out, that at the time of their departure, Laban was gone to shear his sheep;* which gave Rachel opportunity to steal and carry away his Teraphim. These Teraphim were images resembling a man, or at least the head of a man, and were kept by the heathens in their private houses, and were called their houshold gods. And these they both worshipped and consulted as oracles in any doubtful case; the unclean spirit to which they were appropriated, and whose name was written on them, speaking through them, and thereby giving answer to such as did consult them. Those who desire to know more of these Teraphim, may read Godwyn's *Moses and Aaron*, l. 4. c. 9. Wherefore he will find, that among other reasons why Rachel took away those images, one is supposed to be, that her father, when he should hear of their departure, might not have those images to inquire of; and so, not knowing which way they had taken, might be hindred from pursuing them.

Jacob, thus slipping privily away unawares to Laban, passed over the river Euphrates, with all that he had, and made for mount Gilead; whither he got before Laban overtook him. For Laban, not hearing of his flight till the third day after he was gone, was so far cast behind in the pursuit, that he was fain to travel seven days journey before he could overtake him; in which time God came to Laban in a dream by night, and gave him a charge that he should not speak roughly

* A. M. 2206.

to Jacob. When therefore next morning he, with his kindred who accompanied him, came to speak with Jacob, he expostulated with him, but in pretty soft and gentle terms, why he had stolen away from him, and did not acquaint him with his purpose to depart; but carried away his daughters as if they had been captives taken in war; not giving him opportunity to take a solemn leave of his daughters and grand-children, and to send them away with mirth, and in an equipage befitting his rank: then telling him he had therein done foolishly, or unadvisedly, and that it was in his power, that is, he had strength enough with him, to do them hurt, he added, 'but the God of your father spake to me yesternight, and laid a restraint upon me.'

Hitherto he seemed to blame Jacob for unkindness only, but now he charges him with dishonesty: 'If nothing would serve thee but to be gone, said he, because thou hankerest so after thy father's house; yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?'

To the former part of Laban's speech, relating to his coming away without giving him notice, Jacob gently answered, that he did it because he was afraid, lest if he had acquainted him with his purpose, he would have forcibly detained his daughters from him. But to the other part, relating to the stealing of his gods, Jacob, not knowing that Rachel had taken them, answered more warmly: 'with whomsoever thou findest thy gods, said he, let him not live.' And to manifest his innocency, he bid Laban search all his stuff in the presence of their brethren; and if he could find any thing of his amongst it, let him take it.

Laban thereupon, hoping to find his gods, searched the tents of Jacob, Leah, and the two hand-maids; and not finding them there, went to Rachel's tent.... Rachel was in a double strait, with respect to both her father and her husband, either of whom she might well think would have been highly offended with her, if the idols should have been found in her custody; therefore she had need use her utmost art to hide them safely. And

having time to contrive while her father was searching the other tents, she took the images, and putting them into the camel's furniture, the saddle on which she used to ride, she sat herself down upon them. By that time she was well settled, her father came in to search the tent; whereupon, she keeping her seat, begged his pardon, that she could not at that time rise up before him; alledging for her excuse, that she was indisposed. By which pretence he being deceived, and not removing her to search the saddle, though he searched all other parts of the tent, found not the images.

Jacob hereupon dealt roundly with Laban, asking him, 'What was his trespass that he had so hotly pursued after him, and so highly charged him, and what he had found that belonged to him, now he had searched all his stuff; bidding him set it forth before their brethren, that they might judge between them.' Then recounting the long servitude he had held him in, his faithfulness, care and diligence in his service; the hardships he had undergone therein, both by day and by night, and the hard and unequal terms he had held him to; he concluded thus, 'Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, (that God whom Isaac feared) had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty: but God hath seen mine affliction, and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.'

Laban, not knowing how to defend himself against Jacob's charge, thought best to let fall the debate; and therefore calling all that Jacob had, (wives, children, cattle, goods) his, and pretending that for that reason he would not hurt them, lest therein he should hurt himself, he proposed that they should make a covenant of peace between them; which they did by erecting a pillar or heap of stones for a memorial, calling it the heap of witness, that neither of them should invade the other. And the covenant being to be confirmed by oath, Laban sware, not only by the God of Abraham, but, heathen like, by the gods of Nahor,

Abraham's brother; and, to go higher, by the gods of their common father Terah. But Jacob swore only by the fear of his father Isaac, the God whom Isaac feared. This done, Jacob, having killed some beasts, gave his relations an entertainment; and next morning early, Laban kissing his sons and daughters, and giving them his fatherly blessing, took his leave of them and returned home.

As Laban went back, Jacob went forward; and God, to confirm him after his rencounter with Laban, and to comfort him in an assurance of the divine protection, was graciously pleased to send his angels to meet him; which when Jacob saw, he said, 'this is God's host:' and thereupon he called the name of the place Mahanaim, which signifies two hosts or camps, alluding therein to God's host of angels, and his own company.

After this, as Jacob drew near to the confines of the land of Seir, the country of Edom, remembering how highly he had provoked his brother Esau, and in what a menacing fury he left him, Gen. xxvii. and that he had not in all this time of twenty years received any account from his mother of the abatement of his brother's anger towards him, which she had promised, when she found it, to send him, ver. 45; he thought it advisable to send a pacifying message to his brother, that thereby he might have an opportunity to understand by the messengers what temper he was now in, and how he stood affected towards him, before he came too near him. Choosing out therefore fit messengers, he gave them in charge, that when they were come to his brother, they should say, 'Thy servant Jacob saith thus: I have sojourned with Laban, and staid there until now; and I have oxen and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants, and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace, or favour, in thy sight.

By this courteous and respectful message, Jacob hoped to appease his brother, if any thing of his former resentments still remained; and by giving him

some account of his substance and attendants, he might stop Esau, if he had not wholly lost all sense and fear of God, from attempting any thing against him, whom God had so eminently blessed. And besides, it would look kindly and brotherly in him, to give his brother some knowledge of his condition, that he might congratulate his prosperous success.

It may perhaps be inquired how Jacob, whom his father, by divine direction, had made lord over Esau, could call Esau his lord, and himself his servant.... Tremellius and Junius, in their annotations on the place, say, 'By this submission, Jacob did not reject the honour and dominion conferred by God upon him: but patiently waiting for the execution of God's will, he kept himself within the bounds of nature, and revered Esau as his elder brother.' But I question whether he had any other regard to the words 'lord and servant,' than as they were then customarily used among all sorts, especially by those who desired to ingratiate themselves with others. As for the term 'lord,' though Sarah used it as a title of relation, to her husband, thereby acknowledging his power, and her subjection; for which she was long after both commended and recommended as a pattern to others, 1 Pet. iii. 6; yet the first use we find of it, not as a relative title, but as a mere honorary compliment, or complimentary honour, coming from the children of Heth, who were heathens, to Abraham, Gen. xxiii. 6, 11, 15, is enough to persuade, that the rise and first use of it was among the idolatrous and heathen nations; and from them came to be taken up, and used by the fathers and people of God afterwards, as many other things were, until the time of reformation; and that Jacob in fear of Esau did therefore use it; and thinking he might thereby please, and so appease, the haughty humour of his rough brother.

The account which Jacob's messengers brought him, when they came back from Esau, put him into a terrible fright, for they brought no answer from Esau, but only told Jacob, that his brother Esau was coming to

meet him, and four hundred men with him. This news did sorely afflict Jacob; for he concluded from the number of men which Esau brought with him, that he came against him with an hostile mind. His straight was doubtless great: fight he durst not; fly he could not; having women, young children, and great flocks and herds of cattle with him. The best contrivance he could think of, was to divide his company; all the people that were with him, and all the cattle, into two bands; which being set at a convenient distance one from the other, he hoped, that if Esau should fall upon one of them, the other in the mean time might have opportunity to escape.

But though Jacob was willing to use what politic means he could, yet he trusted not to that; he knew his safety lay in a divine protection, and he had lately experienced it in Laban's pursuit of him. Wherefore, in a most humble and solemn manner, he addresses himself to God in this earnest supplication:

‘O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee; I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant: for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with, or upon the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’

Very observable is the humility of Jacob in this prayer, and the persuasive and even forcible reasons couched in it. He arrogates nothing to himself, nor so much as calls him his God, or to approach him in his own name; but says, ‘O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac:’ two than whom we find none more near, none more dear to God, since man was made. Then putting him in mind, that he

undertook his journey by his command, 'the Lord which saidst unto me, return unto thy country, &c. and under his safe conduct too, and I will deal well with thee, he abases himself to the lowest (I am not worthy of the least of the mercies and of the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant) which how great they were, he shews, by his being now become two bands who went out with his staff only. Then coming to the subject of his petition, he sets forth the ground of his fear and danger, 'deliver me I pray thee from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, who, though he be my natural brother, is notwithstanding my avowed enemy,' for I fear him, (as well I may, since he hath resolved my death, and is now coming with an army against me) lest he smite me, and (not me only, but my wives and children also) the mother with, or upon, the children, (while she, to save her children, covers their bodies with her own.) And besides all this, if thou shouldst suffer me and my seed to be cut off, how will thy promise be fulfilled, who hast said, 'I will surely do they good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea for multitude.

Having thus implored the divine protection, he be-thinks himself, that since he had sent his brother word how great substance he had, it would not be amiss to send him a present out of it. But not having time to pick and choose, lest Esau should be upon him before the present could be delivered, he was fain to take it of that which came next to hand. Setting out therefore two hundred she goats, and twenty he-goats, by themselves in a drove; and two hundred ewes and twenty rams in another drove; thirty milch camels with their colts in another drove; forty kine and ten bulls in another drove; and twenty she asses with ten asses foals in another drove; he delivered them to his servants, every drove by itself; and ordering them to keep an handsome distance or space between drove and drove, he sent them on before him; charging the servant which followed the first drove, that

when Esau should meet him, and should ask him whom he belonged to, whither he was going, and whose those cattle were, he should say, 'they be thy servant Jacob's, a present sent unto my lord Esau, and behold also he is behind us.' The same he gave in charge to the other servants that went with the second, third, and every other drove; hoping that the sight of so many various presents, and the so often hearing, from so many several hands, such a submissive and obliging message, might some what mollify Esau's harshness, and dispose him to a loving and brotherly temper before they too should meet.

Having thus set forward his present for his brother, his next care was for his wives and children; all which he caused to pass that night at the ford over the brook Jabbock; and after them sent over what else he had, himself going last. But in the night, being left alone, there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then said the man to him, 'Let me go, for the day breaketh.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' The man then asking him what his name was, and he saying it was Jacob, 'thy name,' replied the other, 'shall be called no more Jacob (only) but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed.'

Some take this man that wrestled with Jacob to be an angel of God; others the Lord himself, in form of a man. Evident it is, that Jacob did not take him for a mortal man, in that he asked a blessing of him. And God having seen the distress of mind which Jacob was in, and received the supplication which he had poured forth to him, was not content only to deliver him from his brother Esau, by turning Esau's anger into love; but for his further comfort and the encouragement of his faith, gave him in this conflict a fresh proof of his power, by which, as he had now pre-

of those great deliverances wrought for him by that powerful arm, which had preserved him through many dangers, and brought him safe thither, he dedicated to the mighty God, the God of Israel.

During the time that Jacob staid in this place, his only daughter, Dinah, took a walk abroad, out of a curiosity to see the daughters of the land; whom young Shechem, son to Hamor the Hivite, prince of that country, descended from Canaan, son of cursed Ham, Gen. x. 17, seeing, fell in love with; and having her in his power, and destitute of all help from her relations, he lay with her and defiled her. And not willing afterwards to part with her, being extremely enamoured of her, he desired his father to obtain her for his wife.*

Jacob had heard of the rape committed on his daughter. But inasmuch as his sons were with his cattle in the field, he forbore to take notice of it till they were come home; they hearing of it hasted home, being much grieved for the evil committed, and highly incensed for the injury done to their sister, and the dishonour of their family.

Hamor soon after came to treat with Jacob about the match, and finding him and his sons together, acquainted them how strong an affection his son Shechem had for Dinah; intreating them to give him her to wife: and inviting them to intermarry with his people, offered them the freedom of the country to dwell and trade, and get possessions in; young Shechem also, being present with his father, begged them to grant him his request; offering to give them whatsoever they would ask, be it never so much, so they would but give him the damsel to wife.

Jacob's sons, some at least of the most forward of them, undertook to manage the treaty; and concealing their displeasure, but meditating revenge, laid a train to draw them within their reach. Wherefore having told them, and that truly, that they could not, according to the law of their religion, give their sister in

marriage to one that was not circumcised; they yet made them believe that if they would be circumcised, and procure their people to be every male of them circumcised as they were, they would then join with them in mutual marriages, would settle among them, and incorporate with them as one people. But withal they let them know, that if they would not agree to this, to be all circumcised, they would take their sister and be gone.

Hamor and Shechem were well pleased with the terms; the young man especially, who for the delight he had in Dinah, bestirred himself to bring his people to consent thereto: his father therefore and he, as soon as they were come back to the city, falling into discourse with their citizens, commended the Israelites for peaceable men, and advised their people to let them dwell and trade in the land, seeing it was large enough for them both, and to reciprocate marriages with them, by giving them daughters, and taking daughters of them for wives; only they told them, there was no way to bring the Israelites to agree to this, but by their yielding to be circumcised as the Israelites were: which the better to draw them to, they laid before them the advantages that would accrue to them from this intermixture and commerce: 'for shall not, said they, their cattle and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours? we being so much stronger than they.' This was a moving argument; and Shechem having a great interest in the people, for he was more honourable, that is, more regarded, than all the house of his father besides, they all consented, and every male of them was circumcised.

Here was policy on both sides; Jacob's sons urged circumcision upon the Shechemites, only to gain an opportunity to wreak their revenge on them. Hamor and Shechem allured their people with the hopes of possessing Jacob's substance, only that Shechem might obtain his desired end, the enjoyment of Dinah.

Now had those sons of Jacob, who had laid this train strained their point. Wherefore on the third day after this bloody operation, when the Shechemites were in the height of soreness, two of Dinah's brethren, Simeon and Levi, came boldly upon the city, and having each of them his sword, slew all the males.

In this action there is none named but these two ; yet some, not without reason, think that the rest of Jacob's sons, who were old enough for such an exploit, and their servants also, were engaged in the execution ; though these two only as authors of the design are named.

And indeed it is hard to conceive, that two men should master a city, and slay all the men therein, though somewhat hurt in such a part of the body as would not wholly disable them from action and defence ; and should also take all the women captives, who, of themselves, may be supposed to have been more than sufficient to overpower two men.

Hamor, and Shechem his son, who gave the occasion for this massacre, they put to the sword among the rest : and finding their sister in Shechem's house, took her away. Then falling on the spoil, they took not only all that was in the city, but that also which was in the field : their sheep, their oxen, their asses, and all their wealth, their little ones also, and their wives, they took captives ; and what they could not carry away, that they spoiled, that they might glut their revenge upon the Shechemites, for the defiling of their sister.

Good Jacob shewed, by his dislike of the action, that he was not privy to the design ; and blaming Simeon and Levi for it, he told them, they had by this means 'troubled him, and made him stink among the inhabitants of the land,' the Canaanites and Perizzites ; who though they were in time to be cut off, to make way for Israel, yet not till the time allotted them by God was expired ; nor then by assassinations, but in

fair and open war. He also urged them to consider, that by this treachery and cruel dealing of theirs, they had exposed both him and themselves to the rage and revenge of those people ; who, knowing themselves to be much stronger than he, might be likely enough to combine together, and destroy him and his family. To all which, his sons, esteeming the rape committed on their sister a crime heinous enough to justify the most extreme severity, made him no other answer than this, ‘Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?’ And here it may be worth noting, that they who submitted themselves to be circumcised, not from a religious ground, but in hopes thereby to get all Jacob’s cattle and wealth, did thereby lose their own, together with their lives.

But, as Jacob’s fear was not groundless, God took care to ease him of it, by removing him from the danger. Wherefore he bid him arise, and go up to Beth-el, and dwell there ; and make there an altar unto God, who had appeared unto him, to comfort and strengthen him, when he fled from the face of his brother Esau ; of whom he was then as much afraid, as he was now of these people.

Jacob hereupon gave strict charge to his family, and to all that belonged to him, that they should ‘put away the strange gods which they had, and be clean, and change their garments ;’ a type of sanctification ; and then let us arise, said he, and go up to Beth-el, the house of God. Perhaps he might, by this time, have discovered that Rachel had got and kept her father’s idols ; however, by this means, Jacob had got from them all the strange gods they had, and together with them their ear-rings ; which by some people were worn in a superstitious devotion, as being thought to have some magical virtue or charm in them. And it is not unlikely that some of Jacob’s servants, if they themselves were not Ishmaelites, might have taken up the use of wearing ear-rings from the Ishmaelites, amongst whom it was afterwards a known fashion. Judg. viii. 24.

These ear-rings, that they might not become a snare to him and his family, as the like did afterwards to Gideon, Judg. viii. 27 ; Jacob resolved to make sure of, as well as of the idols : therefore he did not only bury them, but he hid them ; he buried them so privily, that none of his family should know where they were laid, to take them up again : he hid them under the oak by Shechem ; and then set forward on their journey towards Beth-el. And God struck such a terror upon the cities round about him, as he went, that notwithstanding the provocation his sons had given, by the outrage they had committed at Shechem, nobody pursued after them.

Being come to Beth-el, (heretofore Luz) he there built an altar, as God had commanded him. And upon that altar, and at that time, it is supposed he performed the vow he had made, when God appeared to him in the same place, as he fled from his brother Esau, Gen. xxviii. 20, 22 ; which, when he had performed, God appearing to him again, confirmed unto him his new name Israel ; and gave him repeated assurances of his promises made to Abraham and to Isaac, with new blessings to himself. Whereupon Jacob, in the place where God had now talked with him, did set up a pillar of stone, as a lasting monument of his gratitude and devotion, and poured a drink-offering and oil thereon.

At Beth-el he buried Deborah, his mother's nurse : who, for what reason she is here mentioned, or how she now came to be in his family, is not clear. It is conjectured, that after she had attended her mistress Rebekah to her marriage, and seen her well settled in her family, she went back to Haran again, and there dwelt in Laban's house, till Jacob returning home, she put herself into the company, with a desire to see her old mistress once again. Doubtless, she was had in good esteem by them, because they bewailed her death so much, that the oak, under which she was buried, was called the oak of weeping.

Jacob staid not long at Beth-el, but hastened to Mamre to see his father; and Ephrath, afterwards called Bethlehem, being in their way, they aimed to have got thither; but though they had but a little way to it they could not reach the town, before Rachel fell in travail of her second and last child; but having a hard labour, the midwife to encourage her, bid her not fear, for she should have this son also: she was delivered of him, but died immediately, and just as she departed she called the boy's name Ben-oni, that is, the son of my sorrow. But his father, probably not liking that the remembrance of so sorrowful a subject should be perpetuated, and continually renewed to him as often as he should hear his son named, called him Benjamin, which signifies, the son of my right hand; intimating thereby how near and dear he should be to him.

Having buried Rachel on the way, in the place where she died, and for a mark to know it by, set up a pillar on her grave, Jacob went on his journey. But ere he could reach Mamre, where his father dwelt, an occasion of greater grief than this, though doubtless this, considering the passionate love he bare to Rachel, must needs be very great, befel him. For Reuben his eldest son defiled his father's bed, by committing incest with Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, and his father's secondary wife or concubine. Jacob, it seems, heard of it; yet I do not find he did then take any public notice of it; but doubtless it sank deep in his mind, and stuck by him to his dying day; for just before his death, giving his blessing amongst his children, he rubbed Reuben with this: 'Reuben, said he, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellence of dignity, and the excellency of power.' This had been his portion by virtue of his birth-right, had he not by that transgression lost it. But now become unstable as water, which advanced never so high, falls down again, his doom was, 'Thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy father's

bed, and defiledst it,' Gen. xlix. 3, 4. So to Judah, of whom our Lord was to come, was Reuben's birth-right transferred, ver. 8, from whom also in time it fell to the son of Rachel, who in right should have been Jacob's first wife, and whom Jacob thought he had embraced, when he begat Reuben.

At length Jacob reached Mamre, the city of Arbah, afterwards Hebron, where his grandfather Abraham had sojourned, and his father Isaac then dwelt; who may well be supposed to have rejoiced greatly for his son Jacob's safe return, after so long an absence; as well as Jacob, in that he found his father living and in health.

But long he had not been here, ere another sorrowful exercise befel him: whereof this was the occasion.

His son Joseph, having now attained to the seventeenth year of his age, was with his brethren, Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher, the sons of Jacob by Bilhah and Zilpah, feeding the flock; and he brought unto his father an evil report of them, which estranged their love from him. His father also could not conceal the extraordinary love he bare to Joseph, more than to all his other children; both as he was the son of his old age, and the eldest son of his best beloved Rachel: but he must needs make him a fine coat, of divers colours,* to distinguish him from his brethren; for which they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Neither was this all; Joseph had two very significant dreams, which he told his brethren: and that made them hate him the more. His first dream was, that 'his brethren and he binding sheaves together in the field, his sheaf arose and stood upright, and their sheaves round about made obeisance to his sheaf.' When he had told this dream to his brethren, they answered with disdainful scorn, 'Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?' And they hated him the more for this; but he, poor lad, went on, and dreamed again, that the

sun and the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to him ; this dream also, in his childish simplicity, he told not to his brethren only, but to his father too. His father, observing the tendency of the dream, and knowing his brethren did not already well brook him, not only rebuked him before them, but a little to ridicule it, by applying it to Rachel, who was dead and buried, as well as to himself and them, asked him, ‘ shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth ? ’ As if he had said, if thou couldest expect that from me, and thy brethren ; yet must thy mother arise out of her grave, and come to bow to thee ? Not considering, that though Rachel his natural mother was dead ; yet Leah his step-mother was still living. But though his father was willing thus to make light of it, that it might be the less offence to his brethren ; yet it made an impression on Jacob’s mind.

Soon after this, his brethren being gone to feed the flock in Shechem, Israel sent Joseph to see how they did, and how the flocks stood in health, bidding him bring him word again. Joseph thereupon going out of the vale of Hebron to Shechem, and not finding them there, wandered about, till a certain man finding him, and upon inquiry understanding he looked for his brethren, directed him to Dothan, whither they were gone, and thither he went after them.

As soon as they saw him, and before he came up to them, having let in a deep offence into their minds against him because of his dreams, they conspired to slay him, saying one to another, ‘ Behold this master dreamer is coming ; as soon as he comes, let us slay him and cast him into some pit, and we will say some evil beast hath devoured him ; and then we shall see what will become of his dreams.’

Reuben hearing this bloody contrivance, and wholly disliking it, studied how to prevent it ; that he might deliver him safe to his father. Wherefore, persuading them not to kill him, he advised them to abstain from shedding blood ; ‘ but rather, said he, cast him

into this pit, that is in the wilderness ; and lay no violent hand upon him.' The rest, considering that if he perished in that pit, that would as well answer their end of ridding themselves of him, consented to Reuben's counsel.

Accordingly, when Joseph was come up to them, they seized on him, took off his gay coat, and cast him into the pit ; which at that time was dry and empty. Poor Joseph meanwhile, extremely frightened with this rough entertainment, and bitterly crying out in the anguish of his soul, besought his brethren not to kill him, nor to throw him into that pit, where he must miserably die by famine : but they being resolutely bent to destroy him, would not hear him.

Reuben, seeing him put into the pit, conceived good hope that he should find means to deliver him from thence ; and therefore seemed to concur with them. But he going from them on some occasion, they, while they were eating some victuals, espied a company of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, and going down to Egypt, with their camels laden with spicery and other merchandise. At sight of these, Judah said to the rest of them, ' What shall we get by killing our brother, and concealing his blood ? come let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, and our flesh.' The rest considering that by this means they would rid their hands of him, without shedding his blood, and should get something by the bargain too, closed with the proposition ; and drawing Joseph up out of the pit, notwithstanding his most earnest intreaty, having, now that Reuben was absent, no advocate for him amongst them, they sold him to those Ishmaelitish merchants, for twenty pieces, or shekels, of silver ; and these carrying him into Egypt, sold him to Potiphar, an officer to king Pharaoh, and captain of his guards.

But when Reuben returning by the pit missed Joseph, fearing they had slain him in his absence, he rent his clothes, which was the custom of those countries and times, to express the highest grief ; and of

which, though afterwards more frequently used, this is the first instance we have, and coming to his brethren, he cried out, ‘Alas, the child is gone, what shall become of me, or whither shall I go?’ For poor Reuben having greatly offended his father before, in his trespass with Bilhah, his father’s concubine, and probably hoping to have regained his favour, by preserving his beloved son, and restoring him safe to him; having now lost the hope of that advantage, and reasonably fearing that his father’s displeasure would fall heaviest on him, both as he was highly offended with him already, and as he being the eldest, should have had most care of the younger, was wonderfully troubled for the loss of Joseph.

But the rest of the brethren, contriving how to manage the matter to their father, so as to throw off all suspicion from themselves, took Joseph’s coat; and having killed a kid, and dipped the coat in the blood, they sent it to their father, by some that should say to him, ‘This have we found: see whether it be thy son’s coat or no?’

Poor Jacob, to his sorrow, knew the coat, and said, ‘It is my son’s coat.’ And being deceived by the blood which was on it, not suspecting his other sons could have been guilty of such unnatural cruelty, he cried out, ‘An evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is, without doubt, rent in pieces.’ Then, through extremity of grief, rending his clothes, he put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

It is probable that when his guilty sons saw their father thus overwhelmed with sorrow, it might make their hard hearts relent; and though they durst not discover to him what they had done unto Joseph, which had been the only way to mitigate his grief; yet they, bad as they were, undertook to comfort him; and so did, and innocently might, their wives, and their sister Dinah. But he, refusing to be comforted, said, ‘I will go down into the grave to my son mourning:’ meaning thereby, that he would not cease mourning for his son so long as he lived.

Some time before this fell out, Judah had committed a great fault, in marrying a Canaanitish woman, by whom he had three sons, viz. Er, Onan, and Shelah. But because this led him into a greater transgression afterwards, which was not fully completed till after Joseph was sold and gone into Egypt, Moses deferred the first part of it, that he might give the story intire together; which was thus:

Judah going down from his brethren, turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah, with whom he contracted a friendship, which proved a snare to him: for being at Hirah's house, he there saw a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and taking a fancy to her, he married her, and by her had those three sons, whom I mentioned before.

In process of time, when Er, his eldest son, was grown marriageable, he took a wife for him, whose name was Tamar; but Er, proving a wicked man in the sight of the Lord, however he might appear to men, the Lord slew him. He thus dying without issue, Judah bids his second son Onan marry his brother's wife, that he might raise up seed to his brother.

This was long before the law, by which it was afterwards enjoined, Deut. xxv. 5; and yet, though this be the first mention we have of it, it seems it was then a custom, and well understood even by young Onan: for he knew that the seed should not be his, but that the first born of such an union should be reputed to be the seed of the deceased brother, and should bear his name, as was afterwards declared, Deut. xxv. 6. When therefore Onan went in unto his brother's wife, he disappointed their expectation, that he might not give seed to his brother; which thing so displeased the Lord, that he slew him also.

Shelah, the third son, was yet too young; wherefore Judah desired his daughter-in-law Tamar to go to her father's house, and there remain a widow, till his son Shelah should be grown up; which Tamar did.

expecting that when he was grown up she should have been given to him. But when she saw that Shelah was grown up to man's estate, and yet she was not given unto him; taking it ill that she was so neglected, she watched a time when her father-in-law Judah, having buried his wife, went up to his sheep-shearers at Timnath, to comfort himself there, with his friend Hirta, the Adullamite; and having laid aside the garments of her widowhood, and covered and wrapped herself up in a veil, she sat down in a place where two ways met, by the way that Judah was to pass to Timnath.*

When he had came and saw her sitting there with her face covered, not thinking she had been his daughter-in-law, but concluding she was a common harlot, that sat there, to let herself out to hire; he stept to her, and asked her to grant him admittance to her. She was as forward to yield as he to offer, only she was willing to know upon what terms, and therefore asked him what he would give her. He told her he would send her a kid from the flock, which she accepted; but having a further design upon him, she demanded a pledge of him, until he should send the kid. He asked her what pledge he should give her. She pitched upon his signet, his staff and bracelets, so we read it in the English bibles; but some think, instead of bracelets, it should rather be read his handkerchief; it not being clear, that in those times the men of Israel did wear bracelets. Tremellius and Junius turn it by Sudarium, which signifies an handkerchief; and Dr. Gell thinks it should be so....See his Essay, p. 176. Whatever it was, he delivered them to her; whereupon the terms being agreed, they went together; and she conceived by him.

As soon as he had left her, she left the place; not staying for the kid, for she regarded not the hire, but the pledge; and putting off her veil, dressed herself in her widow's attire again. Judah, being got to his flock, made haste to send the kid by his friend the

Adullamite, that he might receive the pledge again ; but Hira could neither find her nor hear of her ; which he, returning, told Judah ; who thinking it best for his own reputation, not to make much inquiry after her, said, ‘ Let her take it to her, if she will, lest we be ashamed.’

About three months after, Judah was told that his daughter-in-law Tamar had played the harlot, and was with child. He, thereupon, rashly passing sentence on her unheard, said, ‘ Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.’ Now her pledge stood her in stead ; for sending them to him, she desired him ‘ to consider whose things, the signet, staff, &c. were ; for by the man whose these are, am I,’ said she, ‘ with child.’ Judah, now seeing himself caught, acknowledged them to be his ; and confessing his fault, in not having given her to his son Shelah, declared ‘ she was more righteous than he.’

When the time for her delivery was come, she proved with child of twins ; whereof one putting out his hand, the midwife bound a scarlet thread about it : but he drawing his hand back again, his brother broke by him, and came out before him. Whereupon he was called Pharez, a breach ; and the other with the thread on his hand, was called Zarah. Thus, instead of the brother raising up seed to his deceased brother, the father raised seed to his son ; but knew her no more.

Now though this latter part of Judah’s story, relating to his incest with his daughter Tamar, was acted after Joseph was sold, and while he was in Egypt ; yet the former part of it, relating his marriage with Shuah’s daughter, and the birth of his three sons by her, must needs have fallen out before Joseph was sold : for there being but two and twenty years, between Joseph’s being sold into Egypt, and Jacob’s going down into Egypt to him, it could not be, which Tremellius and Junius well observe, that in so short a space, Judah could marry a wife, have three sons at three several births by her, marry two of those sons successively to one

woman, defer the marriage of the third son to the same woman beyond the due time, afterwards himself have sons by the same woman, his daughter-in-law, and one of those sons, Pharez, begat two sons, Hezron and Hamul, Gen. xlv. 12, before Jacob went down into Egypt.

Within this time also Isaac, the longest liver of any since Terah, being an hundred and fourscore years of age, gave up the ghost, and was buried by his sons Esau and Jacob, Gen. xxxv. 28, 29, in the cave, in the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-ground, and in which he, and Sarah his wife, had been buried, Gen. xlix. 30, 31. What time Rebekah, Isaac's wife, died, is not set down in the holy scriptures; only that she was buried in the same place in which her husband was. But Broughton says, that the Rabbins hold that she died in the hundred and seventh year of her age, which was the hundred fifty sixth year of her husband's, a year before Jacob left Laban; by which computation she must have been nineteen years old, when she married Isaac at forty; but surely if she were so old when she died, Deborah her nurse must needs have lived to a great age, who out-lived her, and yet must be supposed to have been older than she, when she undertook to be her nurse.

Isaac's funeral being over, Esau, considering that his brother and he had too great stock and substance to dwell together, or very near one to the other, departed from his brother Jacob: and yielding to him the privilege of birth-right, took his wives and children, and all his family, with his cattle, beasts, and all his substance, which he had gotten in the land of Canaan, and went and dwelt in mount Seir, which signifies bristled, or hairy; a fit place for such an hairy man to dwell in. But Jacob, succeeding his father in his estate, dwelt where his father did, in the land of Canaan.

The generations of Esau are set down in Gen. xxxvi, with the names of the dukes and kings that came

out of him, and the places where they settled; which serves to give light to many places in the scriptures, especially in the writings of the prophets, for the finding out the originals and settlements of families, people and nations derived from him.

The last account we have of Joseph, was, that he was sold to Potiphar, captain of the guards to the king of Egypt, who soon found the goodness of his bargain, in the advantage of having a faithful servant; for the Lord was with Joseph, and made all that he had to prosper in his hand; and his master saw it. Wherefore Joseph grew much into his master's favour, who raised him higher and higher in his family, till at length he made him 'overseer over his house, and put all that he had into his hand;' leaving his whole estate, within doors and without, to his care and ordering. Nor could he have done better for his own advantage, for the Lord blessed the Egyptian's family for Joseph's sake; so that the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had, both in the house and in the field.

Now Joseph being a comely young man, his master's wife had cast an amorous eye upon him, to have drawn him into a wanton familiarity with her; but finding her allurements did not work upon him, and yet that her desire went forth strongly after him, she was fain to speak plain, and ask him downright. Joseph not only gave her a short, but positive denial; but, to free himself from her further importunity, gave her the reason of his denial; desiring her to consider the great trust and confidence his master had reposed in him, and the great ingratitude he should be guilty of, if he should abuse his master. 'My master, said he, hath committed to my hand all that he hath, in such manner, that he requires no account of me, nor knows what he has in the house; he hath advanced me so high, that there is no man in this house, except himself, greater than I: neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee; and thee, because thou art his

wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

This repulse, which he hoped would have put a stop to her lewd passion, had not so good an effect on her; but she, persisting in unlawful desires, lay at him day by day to commit evil with her. And when she saw that he would not hearken to her, but shunned her company, she watched an opportunity one time, when he came into the house, to order things belonging to his office; and there being none of the men in the house at that time, she on a sudden caught hold of him by his cloak, and pressed him then to lie with her. He, not knowing how otherwise to get from her, let fall his cloak in her hand, and slipping away got out of her reach.

When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand, and was run from her, despairing thenceforward of obtaining her desire, and being afraid lest he should discover her naughtiness, she, moved partly with revengeful rage, and partly with policy, to prevent his accusing her, by making the first charge upon him, called out aloud to the men that were about the house, and holding forth Joseph's cloak in her hand, said to them, 'See, he (meaning her husband) hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us, (that is, to bring contempt upon us) and thereby expose us to be scorned and mocked by others.' Thus craftily she joined them with herself, (to mock us) thereby to engage them to take her part, in case Joseph should stand upon his purgation. And she called him not by his name, but by the name of his people, an Hebrew, to set them the more against him; for the Egyptians hated the Hebrews. Then going on with her tale, she said, 'He came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a great voice; and when he heard that I lift up my voice and cried, he left his cloak with me, and fled, and got away.'

Having thus prepared the men to second her complaint, if need should be, she laid up Joseph's cloak until her lord came home; and then spreading the

garment, together with her complaint, before him, she accused Joseph to his master, much after the same manner as she had before done to the men.

The too credulous master, having heard his wife's complaint, not suspecting her of falseness, and being deceived by the sight of Joseph's well known cloak, took honest Joseph, and being inflamed with wrath against him, put him into the round tower, a place where the king's prisoners were bound ; and there lay poor Joseph in irons, Psalm cv. 18.

How hard was now the case of this poor young man ; a stranger amongst strangers, in a strange land, having no relation, no friend to stand by him, to plead his cause, to intercede for him ! But he had innocency, and the Lord was with him ; for he never leaves them destitute that fear him, and suffer innocently : and now he extended his kindness to Joseph in the prison, and brought him into favour with the gaoler ; so that the gaoler committed all the prisoners to his care, and whatsoever was done in the prison, was done by his order and direction, for the gaoler looked not after any thing, but left all to him ; because he was sensible the Lord was with him, and prospered all he took in hand. Thus Joseph was now overseer of the prison, as he had been before of Potiphar's house.

But still Joseph was a prisoner ; wherefore the Lord, in due time, made way for Joseph to be brought out of prison, the manner whereof was thus : the chief butler, and the chief baker of Pharaoh king of Egypt, had offended their lord the king ; for which he being wroth with them, committed them to the same prison in which Joseph was a prisoner : and the keeper of the prison charging Joseph with them, he, because they were courtiers, waited on them himself.

In one and the same night, while they were in prison, each of them dreamed a dream ; and when Joseph came to them in the morning, finding them both sad, he asked them, what ailed them that they looked so sorrowful. They told him, they had each of them dreamed a dream that night, which troubled them ;

and the rather, because they knew not the meaning of their dreams, having none to interpret them to them. For the Egyptians depended much upon soothsayers for interpreting dreams, and there being no soothsayer in the prison, nor they, who were close prisoners, having liberty either to go out to, or send for a soothsayer in to them, they knew not how to come by the interpretation of their dreams.

Joseph, having taken them off from depending on soothsayers, by referring them to God, to whom interpretations of dreams belong, desired them to let him hear their dreams. Whereupon the butler beginning, related his dream thus :

‘ In my dream, behold, a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches ; and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth ; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes : and I, having Pharaoh’s cup in my hand, took the grapes, and having pressed them into the cup, gave it into Pharaoh’s hand.’

Joseph, having heard the dream, presently told the butler, not conjecturally, but positively, ‘ This is the interpretation of the dream ; the three branches signify three days ; and within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head, reckoning thee among his servants again, and shall restore thee unto thy place, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh’s cup into his hand, as thou wast wont to do heretofore, while thou wast his butler ; but, added he, think on me, when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, in making mention of me to Pharaoh, to bring me out of this house ; for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and have not done any thing since I came into Egypt, for which they should put me into this prison.’

When the baker saw that the butler had got a good interpretation of his dream, he was forward to tell his dream also to Joseph ; and Joseph being as attentive to hear, he thus related : ‘ I also, said he, was in my dream, and behold, I had three baskets of open work

upon my head, and in the uppermost was all manner of baker's meats for Pharaoh, and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.'

No sooner had Joseph heard the dream, but he presently told the baker, this is the interpretation thereof, 'The three baskets signify three days, and within these three days shall Pharaoh lift thee quite out of thy office; and shall hang thee on a tree, and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.' Accordingly, on the third day after, it being Pharaoh's birth-day, he made a feast unto all his servants; and then did he restore the chief butler to his office again, who thereupon gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand, but he hanged the chief baker: and so was Joseph's interpretation of their dreams fulfilled to each of them.

Well might Joseph have expected, when he heard of the butler's being restored to his office, and to the king's favour, that the butler would have remembered him, and endeavoured his release. But the heedless butler forgot him, and two long years more was he obliged to lie in prison, ere any way opened towards his deliverance.

At the end of those two years, Pharaoh himself dreamed, 'That as he stood by the river, (Nile) there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine, and fat fleshed, which fed in a meadow; and that after them seven other kine came up out of the river, poor, ill-favoured, and lean fleshed, such as he had never seen in Egypt; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And that the ill favoured and lean kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine, and yet seemed never the fuller.' Upon which Pharaoh awoke; and then falling asleep again, he dreamed a second dream, which was, 'That seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, full and good; and that seven thin withered ears, and blasted with the east wind, sprang up after them, and devoured the seven full ears.'

Pharaoh hereupon awoke again; and his dream remaining with him, brought trouble upon his spirit in the morning; wherefore he sent and called all the ma-

gicians and wise men of Egypt, and told his dreams to them: but none of these could interpret them unto him.

Now at length did the chief butler remember Joseph; wherefore he acquainted the king, that when he and the baker were in prison together, each of them in one night dreamed a dream; which a young man, an Hebrew servant of the captain of the guard, did interpret to them as the event answered.

Upon this Pharaoh immediately sent for Joseph, and they that went for him brought him hastily out of the dungeon: but not being in a fit garb to appear before a king, he shaved himself, and put on clean clothes, and then presented himself before Pharaoh. The king presently told him he had dreamed a dream, and could not find any one that could interpret it: but, said he, I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream, so as to give the interpretation of it.*

Joseph modestly excusing himself, gave the king to understand, that he did not pretend to any skill of himself, lest Pharaoh should afterwards have thought he had done it by magical art, as his magicians pretended to do: yet, to impress his mind with a greater regard to the interpretation which should be given, he told him also, that 'God, the only interpreter of dreams, would give him an answer of peace, or to his satisfaction.'

Pharaoh then relating to him his dreams in order, Joseph told him his dreams, though two in appearance, were but one in substance, and had both but one signification: 'for, said he, the seven good kine do signify seven years, and the seven good ears do also signify the same seven years; and both these do signify seven years of plenty: so also the seven ill favoured kine do signify seven years, and the seven empty ears do signify the same seven years; and both these do signify seven years of famine; by which, added he, God hath shewed unto Pharaoh what he is about to do.' For as the seven good kine, and the seven good

ears, came up first, and after them the seven ill favoured kine, and the seven blasted ears ; so there shall first come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt ; and after them shall arise seven years of famine, so great, that all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and not be known, by reason of the famine following, which shall be so very heavy, that it shall consume the inhabitants of the land ; and the doubling of the dream, he told him was to assure him of the certainty and speediness of its coming to pass.

Having thus given the interpretation of the dream, Joseph proceeded to offer advice to Pharaoh, how he might improve the dream to advantage : therefore said he, ‘ let Pharaoh now look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt ; and let him appoint overseers over the land, who may take up the fifth part of the products of the land of Egypt, in the seven plenteous years ; and let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn in Pharaoh’s store-houses ; and let them keep food in the cities, which shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine that shall be in the land, that the people be not cut off through the famine.’

Both the interpretation of the dream, and the counsel which Joseph had thereupon given, pleased Pharaoh and his servants so well, that the king, having said to his servants, ‘ Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is ?’ turning his speech to Joseph, said, ‘ Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art : thou therefore shalt be the man.’ Thou shalt be over my house, and all my people shall yield subjection to thee : ‘ only in the throne will I be greater than thou.’ Then, giving him the ensigns of rule and dignity then in use, as the taking off the ring from his own hand, and putting it upon Joseph’s, arraying him in vestures of silk, and putting a chain of gold about his neck, causing him to ride in the second chariot, and order-

ing his heralds to proclaim before him the word Abrech; a word of uncertain signification, but rendered by some, tender father, by others, bow the knee, in token of honour and subjection to him, he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt; and said to him, 'See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt, and as I am king, no man shall attempt any thing throughout all the land without thy direction or order.' Then, changing Joseph's name, he called him Zaphnath-paaneah, which signifies a revealer of secrets, or one to whom secrets are revealed: and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah, prince of On, called also Heliopolis, or the city of the sun.

Some take Poti-pherah, Joseph's father-in-law, to have been priest of On: but the Hebrew word signifying indifferently prince or priest, Tremellius and Junius render it prince, both here and after, in chap. xlvii. 22, 26; and give divers reasons to prove it should be read princes, not priests. Some English translations render it prince in the text, and set priest in the margin: and the last translation, though it renders it priest in the text, yet sets prince, and princes, in the margin.

Thirteen years had Joseph been a bondman in Egypt, for he was sold thither in the seventeenth, and was now come to the thirtieth year of his age, when on a sudden the Lord advanced him, and set him above his mistress, who had falsely accused him; above his master, who had wrongly imprisoned him; above the chief butler, who had been his fellow prisoner; and above every man in Egypt, except the king only.

And now the seven plenteous years beginning, in which the earth brought forth in great abundance, Joseph set forward on his circuit, and going throughout all the land of Egypt, gathered up all the food, which could be spared from present use, and laid it up in the cities: storing the fruit of the fields, which was round about every city, in the same city. And thus did he every year of those seven fruitful years: by which means he heaped up corn as the sand of the sea; so very

much, that he was obliged to give over keeping account, for it was beyond number.

In this fruitful time, Joseph's wife proved fruitful too, and bare him two sons before the years of famine came. The name of the eldest son he called Manasseh, that is, forgetting: 'For God,' said he, 'hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.' But the name of the younger he called Ephraim, which signifies fruitful: 'For,' said he, 'God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.'

No sooner were the seven years of plenty ended, but the seven years of dearth began to come; according as Joseph, expounding the dream, had said. And it was a general dearth; not only in Egypt, but in all the neighbouring countries: yet there was food in all the land of Egypt, by reason of the stores that had been laid up. But when the famine grew strong upon Egypt, and the Egyptians cried to Pharaoh for bread, he sent them to Joseph, charging them to do as he should direct them. Joseph thereupon opening the store-houses, sold out corn, not only to the Egyptians, but those also that came out of other countries to buy; because the famine was sore in all those parts. And to that degree did it increase, that there was no bread in all the land, save what Joseph had laid up, so that the land of Egypt, and all the land of Canaan, fainted by reason of the famine.

Here in the course of time should come in the story of Joseph's brethren, their coming to buy corn of him, with the various and strange adventures that befell them; and Jacob's coming with his family to settle in Egypt, related in chap. xlii, xliii, xliv, xlv, xlvi, and part of xlvii. But that the reader may have together the account of Joseph's dealing with the Egyptians, I chose to postpone the story of his brethren, and go on to set forth the Egyptian calamity, and Joseph's conduct therein, as it is delivered in chap. xlvii, from ver. 13 to 27.

When Joseph had gathered up all the money, that was found in the land of Egypt, for the corn which he

had sold to them, and had brought it into the king's exchequer; the Egyptians coming to him, said, 'Give us bread, now our money is gone: for why should we die in thy presence, who hast wherewith to keep us alive?' But Joseph told them, if they had no more money, they should bring him their cattle; and he would give them bread in exchange for their cattle; which they did, and for their cattle he fed them that year.

When that year was ended, they came to him again the next year, which is called the second year; but must not be understood to be second of the seven, but the second from the time that their money failed; which was indeed the sixth of the seven. And then they told him; 'they would not hide their condition from him; how that their money was spent, and he had got their herds of cattle already:' so that they had nothing left now to offer him, but their bodies and their lands. Therefore, 'let us not die,' said they, 'before thine eyes, both we and our land, for want of seed to sow it, but buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh; and give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land be not desolate.'

Joseph took them at their word, and bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; except the land of the princes, which he did not buy: for the princes had a portion allowed them by Pharaoh, and did eat the portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they did not sell their lands. But the rest of the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: and so the land became Pharaoh's.

Then said Joseph to the people, behold I have this day bought both you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land; for this being the last year of the seven barren years, they might sow in hopes of plenty again; but, added he, these shall be the terms on which ye shall hold your land, 'Ye shall every year give the fifth part of your increase unto Pharaoh; and the other four parts shall

be your own for seeding the field again, and for food for yourselves, your little ones, and all them of your households.' Thus Joseph settled it for a standing law, throughout all Egypt, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part of the yearly increase of all the lands, except the lands of the princes, which did not become Pharaoh's.

As for the common people, Joseph removed them to cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other. Which probably he might do with this intent, that by so displacing and unsettling them from their ancient seats and demesnes, and shifting them to and fro, one upon another's land, but leaving none upon their own, he might the better confirm Pharaoh's title to the whole, when none knew where to claim.

Thus the Egyptians saved their lives, at the cost of losing their estates and liberties; and of freemen, became bondmen; of freeholders, tenants in soccage, holding by the plough, of service in husbandry. In which yet, so sweet was life to them, they rejoiced, saying to Joseph: 'thou hast saved our lives: let us find favour in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.'

Thus it went with the Egyptians: the account of which I thought would be most clear and acceptable, if it were thus given entirely together. Therefore I passed over the xlii, xliii, xlv, xlv, xlv, and part of xlvii, chapters, where the story of Joseph's dealing with his brethren, and Jacob's going down into Egypt is related, that I might connect the latter part of the account of Joseph's ordering the affairs of Egypt, which is delivered in chap. xlvii, from ver. 12 to 27, with the former part thereof. Which having done, let us now return, and see how in these hard times it fared with good Jacob, and his family, in the land of Canaan, for the famine raged in Canaan, as well as in Egypt; and they were in worse case who lived there, because there were no stores laid up, as there were in Egypt.

When Jacob understood that there was corn in Egypt, he said unto his sons, 'Why do ye look one

upon another? (like dispirited men, void of counsel) I hear there is corn in Egypt; therefore get ye down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may preserve our lives.'

Hereupon Joseph's ten brethren, leaving Benjamin, the youngest, with their father Jacob, who would not part with him, lest mischief might befall him, went down to Egypt to buy corn. And Joseph, who was the governor over the land, not trusting to deputies, but selling the corn out himself to those that came to buy, his brethren coming to treat with him for corn, bowed down themselves before him, with their faces towards the earth: thereby unwittingly beginning to fulfil what Joseph had before dreamed of them. Joseph no sooner saw his brethren, but he knew them; though they did not know him. Wherefore, remembering his dream concerning them, and being minded to try what effect some hard treatment would have upon them, to bring them to a sense of their unnatural dealing with him, using an interpreter to avoid suspicion, he roughly asked them, whence they came: they answering they came from Canaan to buy corn; he replied, 'Ye are spies, and are come to see the nakedness (that is, the weak and unguarded parts) of the land.' They submissively answered, 'Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.' And to take off the suspicion of their being spies, they added, 'We are all one man's sons: we are true men, thy servants are no spies.' Thereby suggesting the improbability of their being spies, being all brethren, the sons of one man; since no man in his right wits would send so many, and all his own children, upon such a capital enterprize. But Joseph, repeating the charge upon them, said, 'Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land are ye come.'*

This drew them, for clearing themselves, to open the state of the family further, by saying, 'Thy servants were twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold the youngest is this

day with our father, and one is dead.' Well, said Joseph, by this it shall appear whether ye are spies or no; ye now say ye have a younger brother: and, by the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Therefore send one of you, and let him fetch your brother; and ye shall be kept in prison in the mean time, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: otherwise, by the life of Pharaoh, (that is, as sure as Pharaoh lives) ye are spies.

Some, from this form of speech, 'by the life of Pharaoh,' charge Joseph with having learned and used an Egyptian oath. But Dr. Robert Sanderson, in his book *De Juramenti Obligatione*, prælect. 5, sect. 7, defends Joseph from having sworn, when he said to his brethren, 'by the life of Pharaoh.'

Joseph having told his brethren what they must trust to, put them all together into custody for three days: and on the third day, sending for them again, he let them know that he feared God, and would not that their families should suffer for their faults, nor that they should suffer if they were faultless. Therefore, said he, this do: 'If ye be true men, let one of your brethern be bound in the house of your prison; and go ye, carry corn, to prevent the famishing of your families. But see that ye bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and your lives preserved.' To this, not knowing otherwise how to help themselves, they all agreed. And thereupon falling into discourse amongst themselves, they could not but reflect on their evil usage of their brother Joseph, whom they all supposed to be dead. And they said one to another, 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that, though we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.' 'Ay,' said Reuben, 'did not I intreat you, that ye would not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, his blood is now required.'

Joseph was present, and heard their discourse : for having spoken to them by an interpreter before, who was now absent, they spake freely to one another, as far from thinking he could understand them, as that he was their brother. But these words of theirs so affected good Joseph, that he could not forbear weeping : which, that his brethren might not observe, he turned away, and left them for a little while. Then returning, and, by his interpreter, communing farther with them, he took Simeon, the eldest next to Reuben, whom he spared, because he not only consented not to their evil design against him, but saved his life, and laboured to have delivered him, and causing him to be bound in their sight, he set the rest at liberty, who having their sacks, by his order filled with corn, and provision given them for their journey, laded their asses, and departed.

But as one of them, when they came to their inn upon the way, opened his sack, to give his ass provender, he espied his money in his sack's mouth, for Joseph had ordered his steward to put every one of their monies in his sack again. At sight of this, he calls out to the rest, and tells them his money was restored. This startle them all : their hearts began to fail, and fear seizing on them, they said one to another, 'What is this that God hath done unto us?' For being conscious of their own guilt, they looked upon this as an additional judgment of God upon them for it, till they came home.

Being come to their father, they gave him an account of their journey, and of what had befallen them in it ; relating to him how the lord of the land had dealt with them, charging them with being spies, engaging them to bring their youngest brother with them, as a proof of their clearness, when they should come again, and keeping their brother Simeon bound in prison as a pledge, till they should bring Benjamin.

This news was very displeasing to Jacob ; but when, upon the emptying of their sacks, they found every man's bag of money in his sack, both Jacob and they

were all afraid, lest some new accusation would arise out of this, when the other, of their being spies, should be cleared. Jacob therefore, breaking forth in complaint, said, 'Me have ye bereaved of my children : Joseph is not, and Simeon is not ; and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.'

Reuben, thinking to persuade his father to consent to Benjamin's going, desired him to commit him to his care, promising to bring him safe to him again : which, said he, if I do not, slay thou my two sons, or two of my sons ; for he had four, named in Gen. xlv. 9 ; which went down afterwards with Jacob into Egypt.

Jacob needed not to be told how ill a recompence it would have been to him, for the loss of his son to kill his two grandsons : so that this proposal did but aggravate his grief, and make him resolve that his son Benjamin should not go down with them. ' For, said he, his brother Joseph (his only brother by the mother) is dead (so he and they all thought) and he is left alone : if mischief befall him by the way, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Thus it stood awhile with them. But the famine increasing sore upon them, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, ' Go again, buy us a little food : ' not taking any notice of the injunction laid upon them in Egypt, to bring their brother Benjamin with them, if they meant to have corn, or their brother Simeon back with them. The sons well knew it was in vain for them to go without Benjamin : and how to persuade their father to part with him was the difficulty.

Reuben had in vain tried his skill before ; wherefore Judah now attempts to draw his father to a compliance : and in order thereunto he thus bespake him :

If, said he, thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food : but if thou wilt not send him, it is in vain for us to go ; so I wish it might be read, rather than in that blunt manner, ' we will not go,' not so decent from a son to a father. For, added he,

‘the man did solemnly protest unto us, that we should not see his face, except our brother was with us.’

This pinched poor Jacob again, and drew from him a fresh complaint. ‘Wherefore,’ said he, ‘dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had another brother?’ They, to excuse themselves, answered, how truly doth not appear, ‘The man asked us straitly of our state and of our kindred; saying, Is your father yet alive? Have you another brother? and we answering him accordingly, could we certainly know beforehand that he would say, bring your brother down?’

Jacob beginning now to stagger, Judah said to him, ‘Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live and not die, both thou and we, and our little ones. I will be surety for him, and at my hand shall thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee; then let me bear the blame forever.’

What neither their reason nor importunity could effect, necessity did. If there be no remedy, it must be so now, said their father to them, do this: ‘Take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present; a little balm, (or balsam) and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds,’ which, if any wonder they should be to be had in so great a famine, let it be considered, that this was but the second year of the seven; there were five yet to come, Gen. xlv. 11. And these things not being used for common food, there might be some small quantity of the old stock remain. ‘Take with you also,’ said he, ‘double money in your hands,’ for he considered well, that as the famine increased, the price of corn would be likely to rise. And, added he, ‘Carry with you again the money that was brought back in the mouths of your sacks; for peradventure it was an oversight.’ Take also your brother Benjamin with you; and arise, go again unto the man; and, which shews where his hope lay, God Almighty give you mercy before the man, or incline him to be merciful to you, that he may send away your brother (Simeon).

and Benjamin. And now having committed all to God, 'If, said he, I be bereaved (of my children) I am bereaved.' As if he had said, I will trust providence, and quietly submit to God's divine disposal.

Now went they down cheerfully, having their brother Benjamin with them, the money that was in their sacks, to return it again, double money to buy with, and a present to appease the angry governor: and now they reckoned they could appear with some confidence before him.

When they were come into Egypt, and Joseph saw his brother Benjamin among them, he gave order to his steward, the ruler of his house, to bring them home, and make provision for them to dine with him at noon; which the steward accordingly did.

This put them into a new fright; and conferring together upon it, they concluded, that this was because of the money that was returned in their sacks before: and that therefore they were thus brought into the governor's house, that he might seek an occasion against them, to fall upon them, and both take them for bondmen, and seize upon their cattle. That therefore they might remove all offence about the return of their money, they drew near to the steward, and communing with him at the door, one of them, in the name of the rest, said, 'O, sir, when we came at the first to buy food, it came to pass that when (in our return) we opened our sacks, (one of us at our inn, by the way, and the rest of us when we came home) behold every man's money, in its full weight, was in the mouth of his sack: we cannot tell who put the money in our sacks; but we have brought it again; and we have brought other money also to buy food with.' The steward cheered them up, bidding them not fear; and to hide still the contrivance from them, told them, 'Their God, and the God of their father, had given them treasure in their sacks; for I, said he, had your money.' And finding them somewhat dejected, he, to comfort them, brought forth their brother Simeon to them; and gave order that water should be brought

to them, to wash their feet in; and that their cattle should be taken care of, and fed.

They meanwhile, understanding they should dine there, made ready their present against the governor should come in: and when he came, they presented him with it; bowing themselves to him to the earth. He asking them how they did, and if their father, the old man of whom they had spoken, when they were with him before, was yet alive and well: they answered, 'Thy servant, our father, is yet alive, and in good health;' and thereupon again they bowed down their heads and made obeisance. In doing which Joseph, no doubt, could not but observe, how inobservant soever they were, the accomplishment of his first dream, Gen. xxxvii. 7, wherein their sheaves made obeisance to his.

Then lifting up his eyes, for his affection would hardly suffer him to look stedfastly upon them, and seeing his brother Benjamin, the son of his mother, he asked, 'Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?' and not staying for an answer from them, said to him, 'God be gracious to thee, my son: for his bowels did so yearn upon his brother, that he was fain to hasten from them, that he might seek a place to weep in. Retiring therefore into his chamber, he wept there; and having thereby given some vent to his passion, and washed his face, that it might not be observed that he had wept, he came forth again to them; and refraining himself from further tears, gave order that dinner should be brought in.

Accordingly, provision was made for him by himself, by the reason of the dignity of his place, and for all his brethren by themselves; and for the Egyptians who were to dine in his company, by themselves; because the Egyptians might not eat with the Hebrews, who were shepherds, that being an employment which the Egyptians did abominate, Gen. xli. 84.

All things being ready, the brethren sat down in Joseph's presence, according to the exact order of their births: and they marvelled one at another. The

reason of their marvelling not being expressed, leaves it uncertain whether they marvelled at the manner and order of the entertainment; or whether being placed not by themselves, as some think, but by Joseph, or his servants by his appointment, they marvelled how he came to understand the order of their ages, to dispose them so rightly in their due rank. However, finding themselves kindly entertained, for Joseph sent them every one a mess from his own table, and to Benjamin a mess five times as much as any of theirs, they drank freely, and were merry with him.

Now might they think the brunt was over; and that they should have no more storms or clouds, but pleasant sun-shine for the future: but alas! their sharpest trial was yet to come. They who were not enough sensible of the affliction of Joseph, were not yet enough afflicted themselves: they must be afflicted more. Wherefore Joseph commanded his steward to fill the men's sacks with food as much as they could carry; and put every man's money in his sack's mouth again: and, said he, 'put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, with his corn money.' Which accordingly was done, and early next morning, by that time it was light, they were sent away. But they were not gone far out of the city, when Joseph calling his steward, said to him, 'Up; follow after the men, and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this (viz. the cup which ye have stolen) that in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he will certainly find out what ye are? Ye have done evil in so doing.'

The steward, thus instructed, straightway pursued; and having overtaken them, charged them, as his lord had bidden him. They, knowing their clearness, made light of it, saying, 'Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do such a thing.' Then as an argument of their probity and just dealing, they reminded him of their having brought back the money which they found in their

sacks. 'Behold, said they, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought back again unto thee, out of the land of Canaan: how then is it likely we should steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?' But to put the matter out of all doubt, in confidence of their innocency, they offered themselves to the search, and that under the severest penalties. 'With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, said they, both let him die for it, and we also will all of us be my lord's bondmen.'

The steward took them at their word; but with this mitigation; 'He with whom it is found shall be my servant, said he, and the rest shall be blameless.' Then every one of them took down his sack; and as they opened he searched them, beginning at the eldest, and so going on to the youngest; and in poor Benjamin's sack the cup was found.

This was a plain conviction; at sight whereof amazement and sorrow took hold of them together: in token of which, they rent their clothes, and seeing no remedy, nor having any thing to say for themselves, they laded their asses again, and returned to the city.

Joseph, meanwhile, who without a cup could divine in whose sack the cup could be found, staid at home, expecting their coming; and when Judah and his brethren came into the house to him, they fell down before him on the ground: but before they could open their mouths to defend or excuse themselves, Joseph sternly said to them, 'What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I could certainly find you out?'

Although they were altogether innocent of this matter, yet so great a consternation and fear was on them, that they knew not what answer to make; till at length Judah thus abruptly brake forth.

'What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold we are my lord's servants; both we and he also with whom the cup is found.'

‘Nay, said Joseph, God forbid that I should do so : the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant ; but as for you, get ye up in peace unto your father.’

This condescension gave Judah boldness to come near to him, and thus bespake him. ‘O my lord ! let thy servant. I pray thee, speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant : for I am as much to be feared as Pharaoh.’ Then repeated, and that more at large than was delivered before, the discourse that had passed between him and them, when they came first to buy corn, and between their father and them at their return home, he pathetically set forth the sorrow their father had undergone for the loss of his son Joseph ; the extreme affection he bore to his son Benjamin, the difficulty they had to prevail with their father to trust his Benjamin with them, so that he himself was obliged to become surety to his father for the safe return of his brother ; and that inasmuch as his father’s life was so bound up in the life of the lad, if their father should see them come back without him, it would undoubtedly occasion his death, and they should thereby be a means to bring down the grey hairs of their father with sorrow to the grave : he concluded his speech with this petition ; ‘Now therefore, I pray thee, let me thy servant (who have passed my word to my father for his safe return) abide here a bondman to my lord instead of the lad, and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me ? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come by that means upon my father.’

So sensibly was Joseph touched with this moving speech of Judah, that finding he could no longer contain himself, but that his affection would enforce him to open himself unto his brethren, he gave order that every one, but they, should go out of the room from him. Which was no sooner done, and he left alone with them, but that, breaking forth into loud weeping,

he said to his brethren, 'I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?'

The name Joseph, with the sense of their own guilt, and the power he now had over them, to revenge, if he would, himself upon them, struck his brethren with so great terror and confusion that they could not answer him a word. Which he observing, spake to them again, in a kind tone, saying, 'Come near to me, I pray you:' and being come near, he said to them, 'I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.'

These last words renewing the remembrance of their injustice and cruelty towards him, must needs pierce deep; where either guilt let in fear; or repentance sorrow. Joseph therefore, sensible of the hardship they now were under, in tenderness to his brethren, who had shewed none to him, to soften the former words, immediately added, 'Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land, and there are five years yet to come, in the which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now, added he, it was not ye that sent me hither, but God.'

Thus did the good man endeavour to ease them, by mitigating their offence, while himself looked over and beyond the instruments, to him who disposes all things for good to his. Not but that it was true enough which he told them; it was not they that sent him thither, but God. For they sold him to the Ishmaelites, who might have carried him whither they would; nor did they then matter whither he was carried, or what became of him, so they could but get rid of him. But it was God that directed him thither, and by various steps of his providence brought him to that dignity and power there, that he might be his instrument in that great work of preserving the family of the faithful, and saving much people alive. 'And therefore, said Joseph,

he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, (by counsel, care, and providing for Pharaoh and his people ; which are the properties of a father) and he hath made me lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.'

Having thus prepared them, he now proposes to them what he had all this while designed, the fetching of his father, with the whole family of Israel, from Canaan into Egypt. 'Haste you, said he to his brethren, and go up to my father, and say unto him, thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me Lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen;' which was the fruitfulest part of Egypt, especially of pasturage; and the shortest journey for him to make, as being nearest to Canaan: 'And thou shalt be near unto me, thou and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast; and there will I nourish thee (for there are five years of famine yet to come) lest thou and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.'

And that no doubt might arise, or remain in any of their minds, whether he was indeed their brother Joseph, he wished them to observe, that he did not now speak to them by an interpreter, as he had done before he discovered himself to them: 'For behold, said he, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin (whom my father will more especially regard) that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you; so that ye may give my father full assurance that I am alive. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and then make haste, and bring down my father hither.'

Then falling upon his brother Benjamin's neck, he wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. After which, as a seal of pardon of all former offences, and a general amnesty to the rest of his brethren, he kissed them all severally, and wept upon them. By which kind carriage encouraged, they afterwards discoursed familiarly with him.

The report of Joseph's brethren being come was soon made known to Pharoah, whom it pleased well, and his servants. Whereupon calling for Joseph, he bid him say unto his brethren, this do; 'Lade your beasts, and go, get you into the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households, and come unto me, and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt; and ye shall eat the fat of the land,' that is, the fruits which the richest land produces. Now, said he to Joseph, that thou hast my especial command for it, bid them do this; 'Take you waggons out of the land of Egypt, for your little ones, and for your wives; and bring your father, and come, and regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.'

Joseph therefore, according to Pharaoh's commandment, appointed them waggons: furnishing them also with provisions for the way. And for a present to his father, he sent ten asses, laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn, and other provisions for him by the way. And the more to cheer his brethren, and confirm his love unto them, he gave to each of them changes of raiment: but that he might signally distinguish his brother Benjamin from the rest, he gave him three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment, or suits of clothes. And fearing lest, in their journey, they should enter into a debate who was most to be blamed for the injury done to him, and by casting it each from himself upon others, should raise a difference among themselves, he gave them this necessary caution; 'See that ye fall not out by the way.' After which, dismissing them, they departed out of Egypt, and came to their father in the land of Canaan; to whom, no doubt, they were very welcome, not only for the provisions they brought for his family, but because his sons, Simeon, and more especially Benjamin, were come safe to him again.

But when they told their father, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt; the good old man had like to have died, through the opposite workings of contrary passions, invading joy, and

renewed grief; for being on a sudden surprized with such unexpected news, his doubtful heart, divided between hope and fear, fainted. For though natural affection would prompt him to wish and hope it might be true, yet his judgment would not quickly permit him to believe that it was, or could be true. Nor did they gain a full assent, though they related to him the particular discourses which had passed between Joseph and them, until he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him; and then the spirit of Jacob their father revived. Then he cried out, 'It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive:' tell me no more of the dignity, power, riches, and honours he enjoys; he is alive, and that is enough: 'I will go and see him before I die.'

Accordingly Israel took his journey, with all that he had: and when he came to Beer-sheba, where the Lord had appeared to his father Isaac, and blessed him, and where his father had built an altar, and worshipped the Lord, Gen. xxvi. 23, 24, 25, there he offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. In doing which, it may well be supposed, he not only gave him thanks for the preservation of his son Joseph, and the safe return of his other sons, but supplicated and implored his protection and blessing upon him and his, in the journey he had now undertaken.

Here God spake unto Israel, in the visions of the night; calling, Jacob, Jacob; who answering here am I; the Lord said, 'I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go (out of and from the land of Canaan, which I have promised to thee and to thy seed for an inheritance) down into Egypt, a country where thy ancestors have been evilly intreated: for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will also surely bring thee up again: (that is, thy body to be buried and thy posterity to live in this land) and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes:' that is, shall close thy eye-lids when thou diest. Whence Jacob, to his comfort, might

infer, that he should have a natural, not a violent death; and that his son Joseph should be with him when he died.

Strengthened by this divine promise, Jacob left Beer-sheba, and pursued his journey towards Egypt; his sons carrying both him and their little ones, with their wives, in the waggons which Pharaoh had sent to convey them. They took also with them their cattle and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan; and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him; his sons, and his sons' sons; his daughters, and his sons' daughters. So we read it, in a general way of speaking, such as Sarah used, when she said, Who would have said to Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? Gen. xxi. 7, who gave suck to but one child, Isaac: though strictly Jacob had but one daughter, Dinah; and but one grand-daughter, Serah, the daughter of Asher, Gen. xlv. 15, 17.

Of Jacob's seed, which he brought with him into Egypt, the names are particularly expressed in this chapter from ver. 8 to ver. 25, and both here and in Deut. x. 22, are computed to be, in the whole number, threescore and ten persons. But because there is an apparent difference between the account here given by Moses, and that which is given by Stephen, Acts vii. 14, the one reckoning the number seventy, the other making it seventy-five; I suppose it will not be thought an unnecessary digression, if, making a little stop here, I give the reader what a learned man, *De Dieu*, has written for the reconciling that difference: whose words, as I find them in Latin, quoted by Samuel Cradock, in his apostolical history, p. 39, on Acts vii. 14, I will put in English, for the benefit of such as do not read Latin.

'Interpreters, says he, have been much puzzled to reconcile this place with that of Gen. xlv. 27, and Deut. x. 22, where Moses mentions only seventy souls, of Jacob's house, that entered into Egypt. But the difficulty will be small, if we say that the places are

not parallel; for Moses makes a catalogue, in which, together with Jacob, his own offspring only, they that came out of his loins, are comprehended; his sons' wives being expressly excepted, ver. 26: for which reason, not only they who actually went into Egypt with him, but Joseph also, with his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, although they were already in Egypt before, are contained in the number of seventy, because they having sprung from Jacob's loins, and taking their original from the land of Canaan, did live as strangers in Egypt, and therefore were justly to be reckoned as if they had entered Egypt with Jacob. A special reason also there is, why Hezron and Hamul, the two grandsons of Judah by Phares, are put into that number, although they were born afterwards in Egypt, to wit, that they might supply the place of Judah's two sons, Er and Onan, who were dead before. But in Stephen's oration, he doth not set forth Jacob's genealogy, but declares who they were that Joseph called out of the land of Canaan into Egypt. For he called more than sprang from Jacob's loins: and yet he did not call all those that sprang from Jacob's loins. There, in the first place, Judah's two grandsons, Hezron and Hamul, are to be shut out; and, in the next place, Joseph, with his two sons. Judah's grandsons he could not call, because they were not yet born: himself and his sons he could not call, because they lived in Egypt already. Those five therefore, and then Jacob himself, whom Stephen mentions by himself, being set aside, there remain of Moses' number seventy, but sixty-four; to wit, the eleven brethren, one sister, Dinah, and two and fifty children of the brethren: to which if thou addest the eleven wives of the eleven brethren, whom Joseph must needs call together with their husbands, and which belonged to the kindred, thou hast all his kindred in threescore and fifteen souls.' Thus much for the clearing of this doubt. Now let us return to our history.

When Jacob drew near to the confines of Egypt, he sent his son Judah before him unto Joseph, to receive direction for going unto Goshen; and into the land of Goshen they came. Upon notice whereof, Joseph, calling for his chariot, went up to Goshen, to meet Israel his father, and presenting himself there unto him, he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck for a good while. It does not appear by the text, whether at this congress Joseph fell on Jacob's neck, or Jacob on Joseph's. Tremellius and Junius make Jacob to have fallen on Joseph's neck, which seems most likely; and that, after he had wept there a good while, he broke forth into that high expression of satisfaction and joy; 'Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.'

After these endearments were somewhat over, Joseph proposed unto them, that he would go and acquaint Pharaoh with their being come; and would let him know, that they being shepherds, and dealers in cattle, had brought their flocks and their herds, and all they had, with them: instructing his brethren withal, that when Pharaoh should call for them, and ask them what occupation they were of, they should answer, 'Thy servants trade hath been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers;' that so they might dwell in the land of Goshen. For the Egyptians, he told them, did so abominate shepherds, that they would not suffer them to dwell promiscuously amongst them.*

Accordingly Joseph going to Pharaoh, acquainted him that his father and his brethren, with their flocks and their herds, and all that they had, were come out of the land of Canaan, and were in the land of Goshen: and having taken five of his brethren with him, he presented them unto Pharaoh: whom when Pharaoh had asked what was their occupation, they answered, as Joseph before had instructed them, 'Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers:' then added, 'to sojourn in the land are we come, for

thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, because the famine is sore in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, said they, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.'

Pharaoh thereupon, turning his speech to Joseph, said, 'The land of Egypt is before thee; and since thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee, settle them in the best of the land: in the land of Goshen let them dwell. And if thou knowest any men of activity amongst them, make them rulers over my cattle.'

The way thus opened, Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and having set him before Pharaoh, Jacob saluted Pharaoh; (so both Pagnine, and Tremellius, and Junius, render the place, and so it is translated in 1 Sam. xiii. 10.) and when Pharaoh asked him how old he was, he with a circumlocution answered, 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few, and evil, added he (that is, subject to many troubles and afflictions) have the days of the years of my life been: and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.'

After a short visit thus made, Jacob taking his leave of Pharaoh, went out from his presence. And Joseph placed his father and his brethren in the land of Rameses, which was the best of the land of Egypt; where he gave them a possession, as Pharaoh had commanded. And there he nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household; providing them food, according to their families, with that care and tenderdness, as if they had been his children.

Thus lived Jacob seventeen years in the country of Goshen, in the land of Egypt; and he and his family, having possessions therein, grew and multiplied exceedingly. But when the time drew nigh that he must die, he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, 'If now I have found favour in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thine hand under my thigh (which was then the ceremony of an oath) and deal kindly and truly with me.'

Bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: but I will lie with my fathers; and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place.' Joseph promised to do as he had directed him; but Jacob, desirous of the fullest assurance, pressed him to swear unto him; and Joseph, willing to give his father the utmost satisfaction, did swear accordingly. Which done, Israel, leaning upon his staff, Heb. xi. 21, bowed himself in token of thankfulness to the Lord, for that, after all his other mercies, he had now given him a fresh assurance, by Joseph's promise and oath, that he should be carried out of Egypt into the promised land.

It was not long after this, ere word was brought to Joseph that his father was sick. Whereupon, taking with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, he went to visit his father; who being told that Joseph was coming, strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And when Joseph was come to him, he recounted to Joseph the promises which God had made to him of the land of Canaan; which Joseph, perhaps, being separated from his father's family while he was but a boy, might not before have heard of. 'God Almighty, said Jacob, appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me; and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people: and I will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.'

Twice had God appeared to Jacob at this place called Luz. First, when he fled from his brother Esau, and had that remarkable and very significant dream, or vision, of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, Gen. xxviii; and had the promise made unto him, and the blessing now repeated by him. At which time he changed the name of that place, calling it, from that wonderful appearance of God to him, Bethel, the house of God; which name it afterwards retained, when it grew into a city. And there did God appear to him again, at his return from Padan-

aram, Gen. xxxv. 1, and 7, and renewed and confirmed unto him the promise he had made to Abraham, to Isaac, and to himself before. And as Jacob at that first time, gave the place a new name, Beth-el, so God at this second time, gave Jacob a new name, Israel; thereby confirming the angel's word, Gen. xxxii. 28.

And after that Jacob had opened to Joseph the promise made of the land of Canaan to him and his seed, or posterity after him; he then proceeded to take Joseph's two sons into a peculiar participation of this promise. 'And now, said he to Joseph, thy two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, (for inverting the order of their birth, he set the youngest first, of which he afterwards gave the reason) which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: (not mine as grand children only, but mine as if they were my own immediate offspring, begotten actually by myself.) As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine; so as to become, each of them, the head of a distinct tribe in Israel; and to enjoy the privilege of primogeniture, in right of their father Joseph, to whom the birth-right was transferred from Reuben, because of Reuben's transgression against his father, Gen. xxxv. 22, and chap. xlix. 4, with 1 Chron. v. 1, 2. But as for thy issue, which thou begettest after them, or, if thou shalt beget any other after them, they shall be thine, and shall be called by the name of their brethren in their inheritance. Then going on, he gave Joseph a brief account of the death and burial of Rachel his mother.

Hitherto, it seems, he had not taken notice that Joseph's sons were with him, but had spoken of them as if they had been absent; but now, perceiving somebody with him, though he could not well discern who, (for his eyes being dim with age, he could not see so well as to distinguish persons at a distance, and the lads being young, stood between their father's knees) he asked, 'Who are these?' Joseph answered, 'They are my sons.' Which was a direct answer to the question; yet Joseph, not thinking it full enough, but

having a pious regard to God, as the author of all blessings, added, 'Whom God hath given me in this place.' Jacob thereupon saying, 'Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.' Joseph brought them out from between his knees; and bowing himself towards the earth, set them near unto his father.... And Jacob kissing and embracing them, said to Joseph, in a redundance of joy, 'I was out of hopes of seeing thy face, and lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.'

Now Joseph, probably having observed that his father, in naming them, had set Ephraim before Manasseh, ordered it so, when he brought them near to his father, that by taking Ephraim in his right hand, he put him towards his father's left hand; and taking Manasseh in his left hand, put him towards his father's right hand; but Israel stretching out his right hand, laid it upon the head of Ephraim who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly: for Manasseh was the first-born. And he blessed Joseph, in blessing his children, saying, 'God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long, unto this day, and the angel (Christ who is called the angel, or messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1.) which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads: and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, (that is, let them be reckoned into our family, equally with the rest of my sons) and let them grow into a multitude, in the midst of the earth.'

It was not pleasing to Joseph, that his father laid his right hand, which carried with it the preference and chief regard, on the head of Ephraim: and supposing it to be done through mistake or inadvertency, he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's to Manasseh's head, saying withal, 'Not so, my father, for this is my first-born; therefore put thy right hand upon his head.' But his father, not by human judgment or affection, but by divine direction, refused,

saying, 'I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people; and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he; and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.' Then adding to his former blessing, he said, 'In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh:' thus still setting Ephraim before Manasseh.

Then finding himself grow weaker, he said to Joseph, behold, I die; using the present time, to shew his death was near at hand; but God shall be with you, and bring you again into the land of your fathers. Moreover, said he to Joseph, 'I have given thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite, with my sword and with my bow.'

Since Jacob was so peaceable a man, never, that we read of, engaged in any martial enterprize, it may be inquired how and when he took this portion of land, which he here gave to Joseph, from the Amorite, with his sword and his bow, or by force of arms. Some refer it to that act of Simeon and Levi, Jacob's sons, in destroying the inhabitants of Shechem, Gen. xxxiv; and so the annotators on that which, if I mistake not, is called the Bishop's Bible, carry it. But that cannot be; for first, Jacob disavowed that act, and blamed them for it, both then and now, Gen. xlix. 5, 6, 7. Secondly, those people of Shechem, whom they slew, were not Amorites, but Hivites, descended from Hivi, the sixth son of Canaan, Gen. x. 17; whereas the Amorites came from the fourth son of Canaan, ver. 16. Others take these words of Jacob in a prophetic sense; foretelling what he in his posterity should do: and through the assurance of faith looking upon it as done, undertook to dispose of a double portion, the appendant to the birth-right to Joseph, on whom he had conferred the birth-right, to be possessed by his posterity.

Thus far the discourse had passed in private between Jacob and his son Joseph only. But now perceiving

his end to come on apace, he called his sons in general together, that while he had strength to deliver his mind, he might take his farewell of them, and not only distribute his blessings amongst them, but foretell them also what should befall them, and their offspring, in after times.

‘Gather yourselves together therefore, said he, and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father.’ And they being thereupon attentive, he directed his speech to them severally, beginning thus to the eldest:

‘Reuben, thou art my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.’ In which words he set before him both what he was, and what he should have been, by the privileges and prerogatives he should have enjoyed by his birth-right, if he had not forfeited it and them; and had he retained the right of primogeniture, he had excelled in dignity, by superiority over his brethren; and in power, from the double portion of inheritance annexed in course to the birth-right. But now, says he, ‘Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.’ Since thou didst not retain thy first station, but like water didst fall downwards, thou shalt not have the privilege of birth-right. And he adds the reason, ‘Because thou wentest up to thy father’s bed, (Gen. xxv. 22.) then defiledst thou it.’ And, as if he would appeal to the rest of his sons for the justice of this sentence, he adds, ‘He went up to my couch.’

Having done with Reuben, Simeon and Levi came next; of whom, rather than to whom, he says, ‘Simeon and Levi are brethren.’ In a natural sense, so were the rest; another sense must therefore be sought: the Bishop’s Bible, by way of supplement, reads it, brethren in evil; and I think we need seek no further. The following words confirm this sense, viz. ‘Instruments of cruelty were in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, (which, by synecdoche, is put for all the

inhabitants of Shechem) and in their self-will they digged down a wall,' (destroying and spoiling the city.) 'Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath, for it was cruel.' Thus their offence is set forth: now follows their doom. 'I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.' This dividing may be applied to Simeon, whose tribe had not a distinct lot assigned them in Canaan, as the other tribes had; but they were thrust within the lot of Judah, Josh. xix. 1, until in the time of Hezekiah king of Judah, a party of them smote the remainder of Amalek, and seating themselves in their possessions, 1 Chron. iv. 42, were thereby divided from the rest of their own tribe. As for the tribe of Levi, it was scattered through all the tribes; having no particular lot or share in the land, as the other tribes had.

Hitherto smooth Jacob, the cause so requiring, had been forced to speak roughly. But now he comes to Judah, the good man's stile is altered: and Judah's name signifying praise, leads him to praise Judah. 'Judah,' said he, 'thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, (that is, for thy strength and valour) for thine hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies, (that is, when thou hast put them to flight, thou shalt pursue them, lay hold of them, and destroy them) thy father's children shall bow down before thee.' Whereby, though the birth-right was transferred from Reuben to Joseph, 1 Chron. v. 1, with respect to double portion, yet that part or branch of the prerogative or primogeniture which concerned authority or government over the rest, is plainly conferred on Judah; and so it is explained there, ver. 2, for Judah prevailed above his brethren, 'and of him came the chief ruler;' though the birth-right was Joseph's, viz. with respect to the inheritance.

So ravished was good Jacob in the contemplation of Judah's strength and glory, that it made him break forth rhetorically, and display it in elegant figures.... 'Judah,' said he, 'is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down; he

couched as a lion; and as an old lion: who shall (dare to) rouse him up?' Then setting forth the duration of his government; 'The sceptre, said he, shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.' And pursuing his allegories, to set forth the prosperity and plenty of Judah's tribe, and the abundant fruitfulness of his soil, he added, 'Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass' colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.' As if wine should be as plentiful and common with him as water.

And again, 'His eyes shall be red with wine: and his teeth white with milk.' As if he would raise an emulation between the clustered vineyard and fruitful pastures, in Judah's inheritance.

From Judah, still keeping in Leah's line, he passes Issachar, and takes Zebulun; whose name signifying dwelling, he only says of him, 'Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships, and his border shall be unto Zidon.' Where accordingly his lot came forth, Josh. xix. 11.

Then coming to Issachar, he says of him, 'Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.' Whereby he foreshewed, that though Issachar should be great and strong in people, yet being naturally dull, and loving ease, they would choose rather to suffer themselves to be imposed upon by others, so they might peaceably enjoy their fruitful and pleasant soil, than, by taking arms to vindicate themselves, disturb their own quiet.

Having gone through Leah's offspring, he takes the handmaids' sons next; beginning with Dan of Bilhah, Rachel's maid. Dan signifies judging; 'and Dan,' said he, 'shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.' This was fulfilled in Sampson: yet was no more than Issachar did by Tola, Judg. x. 1. But it is supposed, the reason why this was said to Dan,

was to shew, that the sons of the handmaids, of which Dan is the first named, though being born of bondwomen, they were in that respect inferior to the rest of their brethren, should notwithstanding obtain some share in the government. But he has this peculiar of Dan, 'That Dan shall be a servant by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backwards.' By which he seems to intimate, that the Danites should prevail more by policy and stratagem, than by open war and plain force. Which Sampson's dealing with the Philistines, Judg. xiv and xv, and the Danites taking Laish, chap. xviii, confirms. But doubtless something more than ordinary impressed good Jacob's spirit at this time; which made him now cry out, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.' Might he not have some sense and foresight of the mischief the Danites afterwards brought upon themselves, when having rifled Micah's house, and robbed him of his gods, they fell into open idolatry, Judg. xviii.

Of Gad, alluding also to his name, he said, 'A troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last.' By which he is thought to have referred to what was afterwards performed by Jephthah, of that tribe, Judg. xi.

Of happy Asher, he said, 'His bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.' To much like purpose Moses afterwards said of him, 'Let him dip his foot in oil,' Deut. xxxiii. 24; each referring to the exuberant richness of his soil.

'Naphthali,' said he, 'is an hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.' By an hind let loose, some think is meant a ready aptness to wage war, and nimbleness to pursue enemies. But since the property of an hind is not to pursue, but to fly, it seems rather to imply a promptitude and dexterity in escaping dangers: to which the other part of the sentence, he giveth goodly words, agrees well; intimating that he will rather by deprecation appease, than by arms provoke an adver-

sary. And therein he appears most like his father, who appeased his angry brother Esau, Gen. xxxii and xxxiii.

He is now come to Joseph; of whom and to whom he speaks, as if he could hardly say enough, or high enough. 'Joseph,' says he, 'is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall.' By which rhetorical amplifications he sets forth the strength of Joseph's family, and the large extent of his two-fold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh (the two branches that run over the wall) which at the first numbering of the tribes, yielded of men able to go forth to war threescore and twelve thousand and seven hundred, Numb. i; and at the second numbering fourscore and five thousand and two hundred, Numb. xxvi, far exceeding any other tribe.

Having set forth his future greatness in his posterity, he looked back, and remembered his past troubles, 'The archers,' said he, 'have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.' Amongst these archers, his brethren may undoubtedly claim the first place: for they are expressly said to have hated him, Gen. xxxvii. 4; and to have increased their hatred to him, ver. 5 and 8; to have conspired his death, v. 18; and afterwards to have sold him, v. 28. Next to them his lewd mistress, and (by her means) his jealous master Potiphar may be ranked amongst those archers that sorely grieved him. 'But his bow (said Jacob, continuing the metaphor) abode in strength, and the arms of his hands (the hands of his arms, says another translation; and why not his arms and hands?) were made strong, by the hands (speaking after the manner of men) of the mighty God of Jacob; from thence is the shepherd the stone of Israel.' So the last English translation has it, making the shepherd and stone synonymous. The Bishop's Bible reads it, 'of whom was the feeder appointed by the stone of Israel;' taking the stone to be Christ, and the shepherd or feeder appointed by him to be Joseph. Pagnine turns it, *pascens lapidem*, feeding the stone.

But Tremellius and Junius make Joseph to be both the shepherd and the stone, viz. of refuge to Israel. There is an ellipsis or defect in the sentence, which interpreters supply as they think best. However it be taken, undoubtedly Jacob had regard, in the passage, as to Joseph's constant resisting the assaults of his mistress, and manfully bearing the severity of his master : so also to his taking care of, and feeding both Israel, the Egyptians, and others, as a shepherd provides for his flock. To which condition and capacity he was advanced 'by the God (said Jacob to him) of thy father, who shall help thee, (to go through the good work thou art engaged in) and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.' (Terms comprehensive of all outward blessings.) Then adding, 'The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills ;' he heaps them all on Joseph, saying, 'They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren ;' which was Joseph.

Having done with Joseph, there remained only Benjamin, the younger of whom he said, 'Benjamin shall raven as a wolf : in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.' Whereby he briefly, but aptly, seth forth the fierce and cruel nature of that tribe ; made good amongst other instances in that of the Levite's concubine, whose story is in Judges xix, xx, xxi.

When Jacob had thus spoken to his sons, and blessed them every one (not according to his own natural affection or inclination, but according to the divine direction given him) he put them again in mind of his death, saying, 'I am to be gathered unto my people ;' and then he gave them this charge, 'Bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite.' Which, that they might not mistake, he further describes thus : 'In the cave that is in the

field of Macphelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan; which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place.' And to engage them the more to do it he tells them, 'There Abraham and Sarah his wife were buried; there Isaac and Rebekah his wife were buried; and there,' added he, 'I buried Leah.' (Of which two women, Rebekah and Leah, no mention was made before with respect to either death or burial.) And to assure them of their right to that burying-place, he tells them further, 'The purchase of the field, and of the cave that is therein, was from (not Ephron only, but) the children of Heth.'

Now when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons about his burial, he gathered up his feet into the bed, a posture denoting ease and quiet rest, and, yielding up the ghost, was gathered unto his people.*

But pious Joseph could not part with so good a father, without giving the utmost demonstrations of filial affection and duty. Wherefore, falling upon his father's face, he wept upon him, and kissed him: and having thereby given some vent unto his passion, he commanded his servants the physicians to embalm him; which accordingly they did.

This being the first mention we have in story of embalming the dead, may well countenance a supposition, that the Israelites here learning it of the Egyptians, and practising it afterwards on great and solemn occasions amongst themselves, as in 2 Chron. xvi. 14, and John xix. 40, it might from them come into use among Christians.

After the set time for solemn mourning was over, (which it seems, for persons embalmed, was forty days; but the Egyptians, to shew their respect to Joseph, mourned for him seventy days) Joseph intreated some of Pharaoh's courtiers, for mourners might not come into the king's presence, to acquaint him that his father, just before his death, had made him

swear, that he would bury him in the grave that he had digged for himself in the land of Canaan; and therefore to beg leave of Pharaoh for him to go and bury his father, under promise to come again. Pharaoh forthwith granted his request; bidding him, by the messengers, go up, and bury his father, according as he had made him swear.

Leave thus obtained, Joseph set forward to his father's burial; and with him went up, to honour Joseph, and grace the funeral, the chief servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's family: only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen; and there went up with him of chariots and horsemen, a very great company.

Being come to a place they call the threshing floor of Atad, they there made a stand; and Joseph made a solemn mourning for his father seven days together. And they mourned there with so great and very sore lamentation, that the Canaanites, who inhabited the land, observing it, said, 'This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians:' from whence the name of that place was called Abel-mizraim; that is, the mourning of the Egyptians.

This solemn mourning ended, they went on; and being come to the land of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought for a possession of a burying place of Ephron the Hittite before Mamre, they buried Jacob in the cave there. And having performed their father's command, they all returned into Egypt.

While Jacob lived, Joseph's brethren thought themselves safe, having him their advocate; but now that their father was gone, their guilt renewed their fear. And as they knew they had given Joseph cause enough; so, judging of him by themselves, they concluded he would certainly now requite them all the evil they had done unto him. Wherefore, to deprecate their offence, and procure favour, they consulted together; and having framed a message in their father's name, whose

memory they well knew Joseph did most affectionately reverence, they sent a messenger with it to him, in these words :

‘Thy father did command, before he died, saying, so shall ye say unto Joseph; forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did evil unto thee.’ And having thus smoothed their way, they add their own petition thus: ‘And now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father.’ Wherein with great art they made use of the most moving arguments; the supposed request of his dying father, that he would forgive them, not only as they were his brethren, his flesh and his blood; but such also as profess to worship the same God that both he and his father worshipped.

Joseph could not forbear to weep, when this message was delivered to him; partly perhaps from the renewed remembrance of the thing, and more for the ill opinion and diffidence his brethren had of him. But when they, having by this softening message prepared him, came themselves, and falling down before his face, said, ‘Behold, we are thy servants,’ he bid them not fear; for, said he, ‘Am I in the place of God, (to whom vengeance belongs) that I should avenge myself? As for you, added he, I know ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, that I might be an instrument, under him, to save much people alive;’ and you especially, as it now appears. Then comforting them, and speaking kindly to them; said, ‘Now, therefore, fear ye not any hurt from me;’ for I will be so far from revenging myself upon you, that ‘I will nourish both you and your little ones.’

Broughton sets Jacob’s death in the six and fiftieth year of Joseph’s life, who, living four and fifty years after, saw his great grand-children by his son Manasseh, and the children of Ephraim to the third generation: for Ephraim, according to Jacob’s prophesy, Gen. xlix. 19, increased faster than Manasseh.

But when Joseph found his death drew near, he called his brethren,* by which I do not understand the other eleven sons of Jacob, who, except Benjamin, being all older than himself, might probably be all or most of them dead; but, the heads of their families, and his own sons: for, in scripture dialect, all near kinsmen go under the general appellation of brethren, as Abraham called Lot, Gen. xiii. 8; see also chap. xxiv. 27. And he said unto them, 'I die, (or my death is at hand) and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware, (that is, gave and confirmed by oath) unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.' And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, that when God should visit them, as he certainly would, and should bring them out of that land, 'they should carry up his bones from thence with them.' Then being an hundred and ten years old, he died; and, being embalmed, was put in a coffin in Egypt.

* A. M. 2369.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

THE

Book of Job.

ALTHOUGH it seems that Moses, intent to deliver the history of Jacob's family entire, and for that reason unwilling to cut the thread of that discourse, hath cast back the story of Job, of which he is by some supposed to be the writer, that he might in an uninterrupted series set forth the account of the Israelites' servitude in Egypt, and deliverance out of Egypt; yet, since there is good ground to conclude that Job lived between Jacob and Moses, in the time that Israel was in Egypt, I chuse rather, leaving Joseph at rest in his coffin, and the Israelites restless under their burdens, which after Joseph's death fell upon them, to insert the story of Job in this place, than to bring it in so far out of its due course of time, as the compilers of the Bible have set it.

Who Job was is not agreed; some would have him to have descended from Nahor, the son of Terah, and brother of Abraham; induced perhaps so to think from Uz, the name of the land in which he dwelt; which they suppose to have been inhabited by Nahor's sons, the eldest of which was named Huz, Gen. xxii. 21. But since Shem had a grandson named Uz, Gen. xxiii, long before Nahor was born, why might not that land take name from him, as well as from Nahor's son?

Others take him to be Jobab the son of Zerah, the son of Revel, the son of Esau, by Bashemath the daughter of Ishmael. But he cannot be Jobab (says

Broughton in his consent of Script. *ad. an. mund.* 2430) for he (Jobab) died some ages before Moses was king in Israel.

Others hold him to have sprung from Abraham by Keturah, which is most likely. Broughton, *ubi supra*, is positive: Job, says he, is of Abraham by Keturah. He is said to be the greatest for riches of all the men of the east, Job. i. 3; into which country Abraham sent his sons by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 6. And amongst the children of the east are reckoned the Midianites, Judg. vi. 3, descended from Midian, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 2.

From the uncertainty who Job was, some have taken the liberty to question whether he was at all? whether, in point of fact, it be strictly true, that there was such a man, named Job, who underwent those trials and sufferings, which in this book are recorded of him? Or whether it was only an instructive and parabolical poem, devised and composed by some of the devout ancients, on purpose to instil into the reader those excellent principles delivered in it. But besides other arguments that might be urged to prove the reality of the story, drawn from the names of persons, people, countries, and from particular passages therein mentioned; the credit given to it by God, through his prophet Ezekiel, chap. xiv, ver. 14, and his apostle James, chap. v, ver. 11, in citing it, and referring to it, is enough, I think, to gain belief, with all who have a due regard to those writings, that it is a real history.

Whoever he was, that he lived before the law may be gathered from his offering burnt offerings, with acceptance and commendation, in the land of Uz, where he lived; which by the law were forbidden to be offered in any other place, than that which the Lord should chuse in some one of the tribes of Israel, Deut. xii, xiii, xiv.

That he lived after Jacob, may be inferred from the character given him by God, Job i. 8, and ii. 3;

‘That there was none like him in the earth for uprightness and fear of God.’ Which high encomium may not be allowed to any, much less a Gentile, while Jacob lived, who was descended from the father of the faithful, the friend of God, Abraham, in a direct line of the promised seed, Isaac; nor well while Joseph lived.

Though the exact time of his birth cannot with sufficient ground be ascertained; yet there is a pretty general concurrence in opinion that he lived in the time of Israel’s bondage in Egypt. And some chronologers have adventured to place his birth in the same year in which Jacob went down into Egypt; and to date the beginning of his trials in the year that Joseph died, being the seventy-first of Job’s life; and set Job’s death in the second year after Israel’s departure out of Egypt, of his age the two hundred and seventeenth: so allowing him seventy years before his trials, seven years in them, and an hundred and forty years after them, according to Job xlii. 16.

But I should think it less liable to exception, if Job’s birth were set a little lower, about the time of Jacob’s death; and then Joseph, who survived his father fifty and four years, will have been dead about sixteen years before that extraordinary character was given of Job, in the seventieth year of his age. At which time he might well, for aught appears, be without competitor or equal. And there being somewhat more than sixty years between Joseph’s death and Moses’ birth, the story of Job may fitly enough fall within that interval of time.

The book of Job, says Broughton, *ubi supra*, in order of time falleth out before Exodus. And the whole book, says he, is a divine commentary on Genesis. So that there cannot reasonably be expected from it any great store of historical observations.

As to the stile wherein it is written, Hierom, in his prologue to it, says, from the beginning of the book to the first words of Job, chap. iii. 8, it is in the Hebrew written in prose. From thence to those last words

we have of Job, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,' chap. xlii. 6, it is written in hexameter verse. And from thence to the end of the book in prose again.

Job is adorned with an excellent character given him by God himself; that he was a perfect and an upright man; and to shew what was meant by that, it is added, one that feared God and eschewed (that is, shunned) evil, chap. i. 1.

His condition in the world is set forth, both in general, and in particulars. In general, that he was the greatest of all the men of the east. In particulars, that he had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels; and five hundred yoke of oxen; and five hundred she asses, ver. 3.

He had seven sons and three daughters, ver. 2, not like himself, but given to worldly pleasures. And being grown up, and removed from him, they took their turns to feast from house to house, every one his day, and invited their sisters to feast with them, ver. 4. But when they had gone their round, good Job, considering the danger that attends such jollity, and fearing lest his children, in their merriments, should have sinned, and spoken or thought irreverently of God, sent and sanctified them, and rising up early in the morning, he offered burnt offerings for them, according to the number of them all. And thus he did from time to time after their revelling feasts, ver. 5.

This pious care of good Job was very acceptable to God, who set a more than ordinary value on him; in-somuch that, when afterwards the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, as we read they did, Job i. 6, and Satan the adversary, for so the word signifies, came also among them, to see what mischief he could do unto them; God, to set forth Job as an exemplary of virtue and righteousness, said to Satan, 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth,' which thou hast been encompassing, and walking to and fro in a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth or shunneth evil.

The malignant adversary, not willing to acknowledge that Job served God from a right religious principle, but for self-ends, answered, 'Doth Job serve God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land: (as if he had said, thou hast made him rich, and dost protect him from all trouble and danger) but put forth thy hand now, and touch (so as to destroy) all that he hath, and see if he do not curse thee to thy face,' ver. 9, 10, 11.

God knew the integrity of Job; and that the exercise thereof might redound to his honour, and turn to the good example of others, he exposed him to the trial. 'Behold,' saith the Lord to Satan, 'all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand,' ver. 12.

Hence it appears that Satan hath no power over them that truly fear God, till he permit it. But now, having got this permission, he who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, 1. Pet. v. 8, needed no spur. Away goes he, and stirs up his evil agents to ruin good Job.

It was not long ere Job's children were all got together, feasting and making merry at his eldest son's house, ver. 13. That time took Satan to begin with Job. He had in readiness stirred up the Sabeans, a neighbouring people, descended from Sheba, grandson of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 3, to make an inroad upon Job for booty, which they did; whereupon a messenger came to Job, and said, 'The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away: and moreover they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee,' ver. 14, 15.

Though this must be a very great loss, to lose a thousand oxen and five hundred asses at once; yet this might look but like a common depredation, which might

befall any one that lived within the reach of such freebooters ; and so might not be taken by Job for a judgment from God upon him ; which Satan knew would be the thing that would most sensibly touch him : wherefore he who is called the prince of the power of the air, Ephes. ii. 2, and who, through his beastly instrument, is said to have afterwards made fire to come down from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men, Rev. xiii. 13, by raising corruscations, or fiery flashes in the air, destroyed Job's sheep. Whereupon, while the first messenger was telling the evil tidings of the Sabeian plunder, another came to Job, and said, ' The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee,' ver. 16.

While he was yet speaking, steps in a third, and says, ' The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away ; yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee,' ver. 17.

Thus was Job stripped of all his substance in one day ; and he that was in the morning the richest man in all the east, was ere night perhaps the poorest man in all the world : yet did not all these losses draw a murmur from good Job.

Satan probably, from the calm temper wherewith Job received the first of these messages, might perceive that these strokes were too remote to raise that passion he desired in Job ; he therefore resolved to strike Job in a more sensible part ; and to come as near him as the bound set him would permit. * This prince of the air therefore, raising a very great tempest of wind, threw down the house wherein Job's children were then feasting, upon their heads ; and with the fall thereof slew them all. And that Job might have no respite, or time to digest the grief of his former losses ; before the last messenger had made an end of relating to him the loss of his camels, another rushes in and says, ' Thy sons and thy daughters

were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and behold there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men (which, from the dignity of the masculine gender, comprehends both sexes) and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee,' ver. 18, 19.

This stroke reached Job indeed, and sensibly touched him, both in his nature and in his judgment. His nature was wounded in the death of his children; his judgment was troubled at the manner and circumstances of their death; considering how ill-employed death found them, how unprepared they were to die. Yet did not Job, now that they were dead, offer burnt-offerings, or make expiations for them, as before he used to do after their feasting, while they were alive. He knew, no doubt, that 'in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be,' Eccles. xi. 3.

But though Job's grief was doubtless very great, yet did it not transport him into any violent or irregular passion. For it is said, 'He arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped.' Rending the mantle and shaving the head, were outward tokens of affliction and great sorrow, much used in those eastern countries, and early ages of the world. And as the shaving of the head, being a deliberate act, shews it was not the effect of a sudden or rash resentment; so his falling down upon the ground, and worshipping, shews he received these afflictions with an humble submissive mind, bowing under them to the hand of the Lord, without whose permission, he well knew none of these things could have befallen him, ver. 20.

Now watched Satan, in hopes that Job would have broken forth into some intemperate and indecent speech against God; when, to his great disappointment, Job only said, 'naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return to the earth. (The common womb or mother of mankind.) The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord,' ver. 21.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God with folly, v. 22, for he acknowledged that he never had any thing but what he received from God ; that if it had not been taken from him, he must in a while have left it, and gone as naked out of the world as he came into it ; that it was but just, that he who gave should have power, when he pleased, to take back what he had given. And lastly, instead of cursing God to his face, which Satan had suggested he would do, he blessed God for what had befallen him ; and thereby proved Satan a liar to his face.

But it was not long ere this restless adversary, wanting more work, and presenting himself before the Lord when the sons of God came to present themselves, (a form of speech, not strictly proper to God and spirits, but metaphorically accommodated to the weakness of man's capacity) the Lord proposed Job again to him, as an instance of a perfect and an upright man, that feared God and shunned evil: ' And still, said he, he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.' ' O ! said Satan, skin for skin ; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.' As if he had said, thou hast hitherto suffered me to touch him but at a distance : I have not yet come so near as his skin ; so that he has yet felt nothing in his own person. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face, Job. ii. 3, 4, 5.

The Lord knew that these exercises, though sharp to nature, would not only redound to his glory, but turn to the great advantage of Job : and therefore resolving to bear him up through them, that Satan should not prevail over him, and to recompense all his sufferings with an abundant reward in the end, he let out Satan's chain a link further, saying, ' Behold he is in thy hand ; but spare his life.' Satan, glad of this enlargement of power, quickly fell upon poor Job, and ' smote him with sore and grievous boils, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head,' ver. 6, 7.

Now was Job, if ever any man was, in a deplorable condition ; his body as it were, studded and covered over with blotches, boils, blanes, carbuncles and filthy ulcers : no part free from top to toe. And these not arising from some peccant humour in his natural constitution, which would soon be spent, or might by medicine be corrected or purged out ; but inflicted by the envious one, whose malicious policy would doubtless raise them to the highest extremity, that he might thereby, if possible, drive Job to blaspheme God. Well therefore may we conclude, that Job underwent the most exquisite and inexpressible pains ; and that not for a fit, a pang, a spurt, a short time, but for a continued series of time, as will further appear anon. And that which increased his misery, was the foulness of his distemper, which rendered him not only abhorrent to himself, but loathsome to all that were about him. So that not only his relations and friends abandoned him, but his very menial servants withdrew from him, leaving him destitute of all human help.

Of this, in his mournings, he afterwards complained, saying, ‘ Mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger : I am an alien in their sight. I called my servant, and he gave me no answer : no, though I entreated him with my mouth,’ Job xix. ver. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Consider him there sitting. He that but the other day was ‘ the greatest of all the men of the east, chap. i. 3 ; before whom the young men hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up, chap. xxix. 8 ; the princes refrained talking, and the nobles held their peace,’ ver. 9, 10 : see him now sitting in the ashes, covered with ulcerous sores and corruption, scraping himself with a potsherd ; the foulest of objects, and, as one of the ancients said of him, a dunghill upon a dunghill.

His wife, who with the rest had forsaken him, and kept at a distance from him, which made him say, 'My breath is strange to my wife,' chap. xix. 17, now came; with what intention is somewhat uncertain, whether of pity or scorn: but certain it is, that what she said to him was so far from relieving him, that it added to his sorrow.

Her words to him are rendered thus, 'Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die,' chap. ii. 9. But from the ambiguity of the equivocal word in the Hebrew, which signifies alike to bless, as to curse, disagreement hath arisen amongst interpreters; and the words have been read by divers diversely.

They that make Job's wife to bid him curse God, and die, suppose Job to have lived, and these exercises to have befallen him, after the law was given, Levit. xxiv. 15, 16; which made it death to curse God: and that his wife, an Arabian and heathen, knew the law, and the punishment for blasphemy; and spake thus to him, not to reproach him, but in pity to him, that he might be delivered from his pains. Whereas, not only general consent places Job before Moses, and God's accepting and commending his sacrifices, offered in the land of Uz, proves he lived before the law; which made it penal for any to offer sacrifice in any other place than before the ark or tabernacle; insomuch that devout Gentiles came thither to worship; of which an instance is in the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 27. But if Job had lived after this law was given, yet unlikely it is that his wife should so soon have learned it, at such a distance: nor was it obliging to Gentiles, unless living among and under the Jews; neither was there any in the land of Uz who had power to have executed such a law on Job, had he cursed, as these suppose she bade him.

Others render her words, Dost thou yet retain thine integrity, blessing God, and yet dying? making her to use a most bitter sarcasm to her husband. As if she had said, Dost thou yet retain thy integrity to such

a God, as, though thou continually blessest him, yet holds thee in a lingering death, under these insupportable pains? But since Satan's design was to make Job curse God, why may it not be supposed that he instigated her to persuade her husband to it; not with respect to any penal law that she knew, or thought could take hold of him, but with expectation that so open and bold a blasphemy would provoke the divine justice immediately to strike him dead, and thereby deliver him from his intolerable miseries?

However it was, certain it is, from Job's answer, though of the mildest, for so sharp an irony as that above, that he understood her not to mean well. 'Thou speakest, (said he to her) as one of the foolish women speaketh. What, added he, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' Shall we rejoice in prosperity, when he gives it us? and shall we not patiently bear adversity, when he suffers it to come upon us?

Thus was Job preserved hitherto, that neither the loss of his estate, the untimely death of his children, the extremity of his pains, the ingratitude of his friends, the undutifulness of his servants, nor the provocation of his wife, drew him to utter an offending word. 'In all this Job did not sin with his lips,' Job ii. 10.

But now Job had some particular friends that lived at a distance, as well from one another, as from him. These were, Eliphaz the Temanite, so called from Teman, grandson to Esau, by his son Eliphaz, Gen. xxxvi. 10, 11; Bildad the Shuhite, descended from Shuah, the youngest son of Abraham by Keturah, Gen. xxv. 2; and Zophar the Naamathite, whose descent is not easily traced, without straining; though some would derive him from Esau.

When these had heard of all the evil, that is, affliction, that was come upon Job, they made an appointment to go together to visit him, to mourn with him, and to comfort him, ver. 11. Now these being great men (the Septuagint calls them Kings) it must take

up some considerable time for them, after they had heard of Job's affliction, to appoint their place and time to meet at; and then to travel in company to him. So that many a tedious day, and many a restless night, had poor Job with patience undergone his dolorous pains, before these friends of his came to him.

When they came within sight of him, it was some time before they could assure themselves that it was he, so greatly was he altered, and so unlike himself. But when, being come nearer, they saw the miserable condition he was in, they jointly lifted up their voices and wept; and rending every one his mantle, they sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven, to express their sorrow for him, ver. 12. And seeing the extreme grief that was upon him, they sat down by him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him, ver. 13. Either their own sorrow suppressing their speech; or, their sense of his misery making them think it unseasonable for them to speak to him till he began.

At length, the seven days and nights being over, Job brake silence, and cursing (not God, but) the day of his birth, in mournful rhetoric wished he had never been born, or that he had immediately died, chap. iii.

This gave occasion to Eliphaz, who with the other two, had already conceived an ill opinion of him, from the unaccountable greatness of his affliction, which they concluded must needs be a severe hand of God in judgment upon him, either for some deep hypocrisy, or secret heinous sin, to fall sharply upon Job. And Eliphaz, in three orations, contained in chap. iv and v, xv and xxii; Bildad in as many, in chap. viii, xviii and xxv; and Zophar, in two, chap. xi and xx; from common topics, that such affliction as his could not come from any but God's hand; and that it is not agreeable to the justice of God to afflict without cause, or punish without guilt, they charged Job with being a grievous sinner, and a great hypocrite, labouring hard to extort from him a confession of his guilt.

Job, on the contrary, being immoveably assured of his innocency, of the cleanness of his hands, and the uprightness of his heart towards God, would never yield to their charges, to make himself guilty, by acknowledging guilt where none was ; but, in responsory orations, successive to every one of theirs, defended himself, refuted their suggestions, maintained his own innocency, and reprehended both their injustice and want of charity. And whereas they, in their several speeches, had interspersed sharp reflections, severe censures, biting ironies, and bitter taunts upon him ; he in answers used liberty of speech towards them, not sparing sometimes to give them sharp and pinching repartees : yet always observing a submissive and humble stile, tempered with great regard and reverence, when he spake of, or to God. But not seeing the secret end the Lord had in suffering this trial to come upon him, he often, and with great importunity, begged a discharge and release out of this life : that (hopeless of relief by any other way) he might thereby be freed from the misery he was in, lest extremity of continued pains should drive him to impatience.

Now when Job had silenced these three troublesome friends of his, one that was present, and had heard their discourses on both sides, being full of warm zeal both against Job and them ; against Job for that, as he apprehended, he had justified himself, rather than God ; and against them, because they had condemned Job, and yet had not convicted him, but given him over, and let him go off with the last word, undertook the matter,

This was Elihu, a young man, descended from Buz, the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, Gen. xxii. 21, and of the kindred of Ram or Aram, Nahor's grandson, (ibid) from whom the Aramites or Syrians came.

He, having made a prefatory excuse, in chap. xxxii, for his interposing, being so young a man in comparison to them, and for the plainness of speech he intended to treat them in, desiring they would not expect from him that he should accept any man's per-

son, or give flattering titles unto man, for he durst not do that, lest if he did, his Maker should cut him suddenly off, attacked Job in a long oration continued through chap. xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxvi and xxxvii: and reprehending him for insisting so much in his own vindication, endeavoured to convince him, by arguments drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty, and from his unsearchable wisdom, which produces ends and purposes which man cannot find out nor understand, that it is not inconsistent with his justice for God to lay his afflicting hand on the best and most righteous of men. And that therefore it is the duty of all men to bear such exercises, when they fall, without complaining or mourning; and to acknowledge the justice of God therein.

All this Job with regardful attention heard, and made no reply; as probably he had said less before, in answer to his three friends, and that less liable to exception, had he not been so teased by their unkind, uncharitable, and unjust reflections; whereby, instead of being his comforters, they proved his tormentors, and drew from him those unguarded expressions, which both they, and after them Elihu, turned against him.

When Elihu had done speaking, and all were silent, the Lord himself took up the matter, and out of the whirlwind directed his speech unto Job: wherein setting forth, with the highest amplifications, his omnipotence, in the forming and disposing the works of the creation, both of the heavenly bodies and of the inferior creatures, as well on the earth as in the sea, through chap. xxxviii, xxxix, xl, and xli; he so effectually convinced Job of his own weakness and inability, of himself, to understand the ways and mind of God, that Job, in the deepest humility breaking forth, said, 'Behold, I am vile, (that is mean, low, and contemptible, in comparison of thee) what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hands upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further,' chap. xlii.

And afterwards, when the Lord had done speaking to him, he more fully confessed to the supremacy, power, and wisdom of God, saying to this effect, 'I know that thou canst do every thing; and that no thought can be hidden from thee.' Well, indeed, mightest thou ask, chap. xxxviii. 2, who he was that darkened counsel, by words without knowledge: for I am sensible 'I have uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.' But henceforward I desire to learn of thee: therefore hear I beseech thee, when I speak; and declare unto me what I ask thee. 'I have heard of thee before by the hearing of the ear,' which gave me but a remote knowledge of thee, but now I have obtained a more clear and certain knowledge of thee; for now mine eye sees thee. Wherefore I abhor myself for what I have said amiss, and repent in dust and ashes; that is, sincerely and heartily, chap. xlii, ver. 1 to 7.

With this free and humble acknowledgment the Lord was so well pleased, that he thereupon took part with Job against his injurious friends. Wherefore he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him (that is, his prayers) will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job,' ver. 7, 8.

Accordingly Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar did as the Lord commanded them; and the Lord accepted Job's intercession for them. And when Job prayed for his friends, the Lord turned his captivity, and gave him twice as much as he had before: so that he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand she-asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters, the fairest of all the women in the land; and their

father gave them inheritance among their brethren. Job's brethren also and his sisters, which may be understood to comprehend all his kindred, together with others of his former acquaintance, made visits of condolence to him, and brought him presents, whereby he was very much enriched. And after this Job lived an hundred and forty years, till he had seen his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations; and then died an old man, and full of days; from ver. 9 to the end.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

Book of Exodus.

WHICH SIGNIFIES GOING FORTH : SO CALLED, BECAUSE IT TREATS OF THE GOING FORTH, OR DEPARTURE, OF THE ISRAELITES OUT OF EGYPT : AND CONTAINS AN HISTORY OF ABOUT 144 YEARS.

THE story of Job thus brought, as near as I well could, to its proper time and place, who descending from Abraham by a second venter, and in another line, is a great instance of that great father's pious care, in instructing his household in the knowledge and fear of the true God ; let us now return to Jacob's family, which we left in Egypt, embalming Joseph, and see how it has fared with the children of Israel there.

After the death of Joseph, there arose up a new king over Egypt, another Pharaoh, who had not had a personal knowledge of Joseph. And an age being now past since the great Egyptian famine, and the whole generation of men that lived in that time, who had tasted of Joseph's provident kindness, worn out and gone, the memory of Joseph's benefits to that crown and kingdom, which ought to have been engraven on pillars of marble, to have lasted to the utmost date of time, was, to the lasting infamy of that nation, already forgotten and lost ; though it might have been easily found, if no where else, in the court of augmentations of the revenues of that crown, had but common gratitude sought for it there.

This new king, observing that the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty ; so that the land of Goshen, wherein they lived, was filled with them, held it expedient to contrive some way to secure them to himself, and himself from danger by them. Convening therefore the chief of his own people, he thus spake unto them :

‘ Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and more mighty than we. Come on, therefore, said he, let us deal wisely with them, lest they yet multiply, and it come to pass that if there should fall out any war, they either join themselves unto our enemies, (and so put us to the worst) or get them up out of the land,’ and so we lose the advantage we may make by them.

The Egyptians approving the politic fears of their cautious king, they jointly agreed to employ the children of Israel in making brick, and building store-cities for Pharaoh. And because the design of this undertaking was not only to reap the profits of their service, but by continual hard labour to impoverish them; enfeeble their bodies, and debase their spirits, they set task-masters over them, to afflict them with burdens, and make them serve with rigour, so that they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherewith they made them serve, was with rigour. Yet, as camomile grows the faster for being trod upon, and the palm-tree, loaded with weights, shoots up the higher ; so the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied and grew. This vexed the Egyptians ; for, as the poet hath it,

Invidus alterius rehus macrescit opimis.

The envious man frets, till himself grows lean,
Because his neighbour's fortune is serene.

And the Egyptians, it is said, were grieved because of the children of Israel, ver. 12, that is, it troubled them to see the Israelites increase and grow strong, notwithstanding the heavy burdens they laid on them.

To suppress their growth therefore, the king spake to two of the Hebrew midwives, who probably were the chief amongst them in that profession, and gave them a strict charge, that when they should do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, if the child were a son they should kill him, but if a daughter, then she should live, ver. 15, 16: but those good midwives, of which the one was named Shiprah, and the other Puah, fearing God, did not as the king had commanded them; but saved the men children also. This pious mind in the midwives, in preferring the just law of God to the unjust law of the king, was so acceptable to God, that he is said thereupon to have dealt well with them: 'because they feared God, he made them houses;' that is, he made them to prosper, gave them children, and blessed their families. And by this means the people still multiplied and waxed very mighty.

But when the king understood how the midwives had dealt with him, he called them to account for it, demanding of them, in great displeasure, 'Why they had done this thing, and had saved the men children alive?' They, to excuse themselves, and pacify him, told him, 'The Hebrew women were not as the Egyptian women: but being lively and strong, they were delivered before the midwives could come to them.' The king, whether satisfied or not with this answer, not finding it safe to trust the midwives any longer, resolved to take a more effectual course: and therefore gave charge to all his people, that every son, which should be born to the Hebrews, they should cast into the river; but should save every daughter alive.

Here it may be worth while to observe, that persecution, as it hardens the heart, so also it blinds the judgment of the persecutors; making them act even

against their own interests. Pharaoh's persecuting the Israelites, in forcing them by rigorous ways to labour for him in servile drudgery, on purpose to oppress and suppress them, hardened his heart to advance to an higher degree of cruelty, in commanding all the male children to be murdered. And had he not been absolutely blinded, he must have seen that the means he used destroyed the end he aimed at. For the chief reason why he would keep the Israelites under, was, lest they should grow strong enough to deliver themselves out of Egypt, and so he should lose the profit he would make of them. But if he had destroyed all the male children, as fast as they were born, there could have been no succession of men of that race: so that when the present generation had been worn out, all the girls being saved alive, he might have been troubled with a numerous company of burdensome women, without ever a man to maintain them, or work for him; and thereby he would have brought upon himself a great charge, without profit. But to return to the story.

This cruel edict, for drowning all the male children, must needs cause great sorrow to the Hebrew parents; and put them, no doubt, upon many a thoughtful contrivance for the safety of their poor babes. Of which an instance quickly follows.

Some time before this law came forth, one of the Israelites, of the house of Levi, whose name was Amram, chap. vi. 20, took to wife a daughter of Levi, named Jochebed, by whom he had a daughter named Miriam; and about four years after, a son named Aaron, whose life it is probable the godly midwives had spared. About three years after Aaron's birth, Jochebed bare another son, who was not only a fair and goodly child, but had something extraordinary and supernatural of a divine beauty upon him, which made his mother the more regardful of him, and more solicitous for his preservation. Wherefore she kept him hid three months, that none of her Egyptian neighbours might know of him. But finding

she could no longer hide him, and fearing lest he should fall into the hands of those that were appointed to drown the male children, she, no doubt by a divine instinct, contrived this way for his preservation. She made a little ark, or boat, of bulrushes, which she daubed with slime and pitch, that it might keep the water out; and having put the child therein, she laid it in the flags by the river's brink, and set his sister Miriam, who was then about seven years old, aloof off, to observe what became of him.*

Propitious Providence so ordered, that presently after, Pharaoh's daughter, whom the Jewish antiquary calls Thermuthis, came down with her maidens to wash herself at the river. And while she walked along by the river side, perceiving the little floating ark, she sent one of her maids to fetch it; who having brought it to her, when she had opened it she saw the child; and behold, the babe wept. This drew from her compassion to the infant, and made her, with an accent of pity, say, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children!'

Little Miriam, well instructed by her mother, found means to cast herself among them; and observing that Pharaoh's daughter took it for one of the Hebrews' children, 'Shall I go (said she to her) and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?' Ay, go, said Pharaoh's daughter: whereupon away went the girl, and quickly brought, her own, and the child's mother. To whom Pharaoh's daughter said, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages.'

This was a welcome bargain to the mother, who taking the child home with her, durst now nurse it openly. And when the child was grown big enough, she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him for her son. And in remembrance that she drew him out of the water, she called his name Moses, which signifies, (says Dr. Gell, in his Essay, p. 185; not drawn out, as the margin gives, but) I drew him out. Prophetically shewing, though at unawares, by

* A. M. 2433,

his name, that he should draw Israel out of Egypt... Whereas his parents, at his circumcision, as the same Dr. Gell there, from Clem. Alex. l. 1. Strom. delivers, had called him Joachim, the resurrection of the Lord; from a presaging hope, that the Lord, through him, would raise up his people Israel, deliver them from the Egyptian bondage they were then in, and bring them again into the promised land.

Moses being brought up in Pharaoh's court, was instructed in the sciences and discipline then used among the Egyptians, both civil and military; which might make Stephen say of him, 'that he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds,' Acts vii. 22. Which, as divers other things, not being read in the Old Testament, Dr. Hammond, on 2 Tim. iii. 8, says, are taken out of other records of the Jews. And both Josephus, lib. 2. Antiq. and Clem. Alexan. lib. 1. Strom. (as Dr. Gell in his Essay, page 187, delivers) report of Moses, that he was General of the Egyptian forces, obtained a great victory over the Ethiopians, and did many other great things before he visited his brethren.

But when he was grown strong, and as Stephen has it, Acts vii. 23, 'was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel; wherefore he went out unto them, and looked on their burdens, the sight of which must needs raise in him compassion towards them, as well as indignation towards their oppressors, which too was heightened by his espying an Egyptian smiting one of his brethren, an Hebrew. Wherefore looking about to see that the coast was clear, and not perceiving any man in sight, he, without more to do, slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand: supposing his brethren would have understood, that God by his hand would deliver them; from whence may well be inferred, that he had in himself such a persuasion, and a stirring of spirit thereunto, which drew him to go among them, but they understood not.

However, the next day he went out, and shewed himself among them again. And finding two men of the Hebrews, striving one with the other, he put them in mind that they were brethren, and would have made them friends; asking him that did the wrong, ‘Why smitest thou thy fellow?’ But he that did the wrong, thrust him away, saying, ‘Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Dost thou intend to kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?’

That word startled Moses; for by that he saw that his killing the Egyptian, which he thought to have kept secret, was known further than he was aware of: and he might well conclude, if that should once come to Pharaoh’s ear, it could not be safe for him to abide in Egypt. Nor were his fears vain: for Pharaoh soon got the knowledge of it, and sought to slay him: whereupon Moses fled, and went to Midian.

In his travel he sat down by a well; where, while he rested himself, the daughters of the prince of Midian, seven in number, came to draw water, to fill the troughs, that they might water their father’s sheep. But the rustic shepherds, willing to serve their own turns first, rudely came and drove them away. Which Moses seeing, and holding it his duty to relieve the oppressed, he bravely stood up in defence of the shepherdesses, and helped them to water their flock. By this means they went home earlier that day, than ordinarily they were wont to do. Which being observed by Reuel, their grandfather, (so he was, though here he be called their father: for this Reuel, who is also called Raguel, Numb. x. 29, was father to Hobab, called also, and more commonly, Jethro, Exod. iii. 1.) he asked them how it came to pass that they were come so soon? And when they told him that an Egyptian had delivered them out of the hand of the shepherds, and had also drawn water enough for them, and watered their flock, he, reprehending their ingratitude, asked, ‘What is he? Why have ye left the man abroad?’ Invite him in, that he may refresh himself.*

This courteous entertainment drew Moses to express a willingness to abide with them, and take upon him the charge of Jethro's sheep; which he did. And in process of time, Jethro bestowing his daughter Zipporah, one of those seven shepherdesses, upon him, he had by her two sons, the eldest of which he named Gershom, which signifies, a stranger there: for he said, 'I have been a stranger in a strange land.' And the younger he called Eliezer; importing, God my help: for the God of my father, said he, was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh,' Exod. xviii. 4.

Now during the time that Moses thus sojourned with Jethro in Midian, the king of Egypt died: but the next successor proved no better. The oppressed Hebrews changed their oppressor, but not their condition; their oppressions were continued upon them, and rather increased, than any whit abated. So that the children of Israel, under the weight of their burden, sighed; and from sighing proceeded to crying; and from crying to groaning. They sighed 'by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage: and God heard the groaning; and remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.' And God looked upon the children of Israel with compassion, and had respect unto them. And the appointed time of their deliverance drawing nigh, he now began to prepare Moses, whom he intended to make use of as an instrument therein.

Moses therefore, keeping his father-in-law Jethro's sheep, led the flock to the backside of the desert: where note the manner of those times and countries; that whereas the shepherds here drive their flocks before them, the shepherds there went before their flocks, and the flocks followed them; which custom is alluded to in Psalm lxxx. 1, and Job x. 4.

When he was come to Horeb, (which signifies *forsaken*, and is called here the mountain of God by anticipation, both from the appearance of God upon it at

this time, and his descending upon it afterwards, to give the law to his people, chap. xix; 20. where though it is called Sinai, it is the same place with this; for Stephen, reciting this present passage, Acts vii. 30, calls it Sinai) the angel of the Lord appeared there unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. And he looking, saw that the bush burned with fire, and yet it was not consumed.

This was a lively emblem of the then state of God's people in Egypt; who, though the fire of affliction did burn vehemently among them, and upon them, in the grievous oppressions they lay under, yet they were not consumed by it; but did rather thrive and increase.

This so rare and extraordinary sight drew Moses to observe and consider it more attentively: and made him say, within himself, 'I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt up.'

This great sight, begetting in Moses a great curiosity, drew him into a great service. For when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, 'Moses, Moses;' and Moses answering, 'Here am I;' God, to strike the greater sense into him of the presence of the divine majesty, and to raise in him a suitable reverence, that he might be in the fitter frame to receive what he intended to speak to him, stopped him from coming on any nearer, by saying, 'Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' The like speech we read in Josh. v. 15, when Christ appeared to Joshua in the form of an armed man, declaring himself 'Captain of the host of the Lord.' Which shews, that wheresoever God, who is holiness, appears, the place is holy while he is there. Therefore Tremellius and Junius, in their note on those words 'holy ground,' Exod. iii. 5, say, '*Ob præsentiam Dei sanctificantem; qua abeunte, loco sanctitas tollebatur:*' i. e. 'By reason of God's presence sanctifying it; which departing, the holiness of the place was taken away.'

much, that he was obliged to give over keeping account, for it was beyond number.

In this fruitful time, Joseph's wife proved fruitful too, and bare him two sons before the years of famine came. The name of the eldest son he called Manasseh, that is, forgetting: 'For God,' said he, 'hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.' But the name of the younger he called Ephraim, which signifies fruitful: 'For,' said he, 'God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.'

No sooner were the seven years of plenty ended, but the seven years of dearth began to come; according as Joseph, expounding the dream, had said. And it was a general dearth; not only in Egypt, but in all the neighbouring countries: yet there was food in all the land of Egypt, by reason of the stores that had been laid up. But when the famine grew strong upon Egypt, and the Egyptians cried to Pharaoh for bread, he sent them to Joseph, charging them to do as he should direct them. Joseph thereupon opening the store-houses, sold out corn, not only to the Egyptians, but those also that came out of other countries to buy; because the famine was sore in all those parts. And to that degree did it increase, that there was no bread in all the land, save what Joseph had laid up, so that the land of Egypt, and all the land of Canaan, fainted by reason of the famine.

Here in the course of time should come in the story of Joseph's brethren, their coming to buy corn of him, with the various and strange adventures that befell them; and Jacob's coming with his family to settle in Egypt, related in chap. xlii, xliii, xliv, xlv, xlvi, and part of xlvii. But that the reader may have together the account of Joseph's dealing with the Egyptians, I chose to postpone the story of his brethren, and go on to set forth the Egyptian calamity, and Joseph's conduct therein, as it is delivered in chap. xlvii, from ver. 13 to 27.

When Joseph had gathered up all the money, that was found in the land of Egypt, for the corn which he

had sold to them, and had brought it into the king's exchequer; the Egyptians coming to him, said, 'Give us bread, now our money is gone: for why should we die in thy presence, who hast wherewith to keep us alive?' But Joseph told them, if they had no more money, they should bring him their cattle; and he would give them bread in exchange for their cattle; which they did, and for their cattle he fed them that year.

When that year was ended, they came to him again the next year, which is called the second year; but must not be understood to be second of the seven, but the second from the time that their money failed; which was indeed the sixth of the seven. And then they told him, 'they would not hide their condition from him; how that their money was spent, and he had got their herds of cattle already:' so that they had nothing left now to offer him, but their bodies and their lands. Therefore, 'let us not die,' said they, 'before thine eyes, both we and our land, for want of seed to sow it, but buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh; and give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land be not desolate.'

Joseph took them at their word, and bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; except the land of the princes, which he did not buy: for the princes had a portion allowed them by Pharaoh, and did eat the portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they did not sell their lands. But the rest of the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: and so the land became Pharaoh's.

Then said Joseph to the people, behold I have this day bought both you and your land for Pharaoh. Now here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land; for this being the last year of the seven barren years, they might sow in hopes of plenty again; but, added he, these shall be the terms on which ye shall hold your land, 'Ye shall every year give the fifth part of your increase unto Pharaoh; and the other four parts shall

be your own for seeding the field again, and for food for yourselves, your little ones, and all them of your households.' Thus Joseph settled it for a standing law, throughout all Egypt, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part of the yearly increase of all the lands, except the lands of the princes, which did not become Pharaoh's.

As for the common people, Joseph removed them to cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other. Which probably he might do with this intent, that by so displacing and unsettling them from their ancient seats and demesnes, and shifting them to and fro, one upon another's land, but leaving none upon their own, he might the better confirm Pharaoh's title to the whole, when none knew where to claim.

Thus the Egyptians saved their lives, at the cost of losing their estates and liberties; and of freemen, became bondmen; of freeholders, tenants in soccage, holding by the plough, of service in husbandry. In which yet, so sweet was life to them, they rejoiced, saying to Joseph: 'thou hast saved our lives: let us find favour in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.'

Thus it went with the Egyptians: the account of which I thought would be most clear and acceptable, if it were thus given entirely together. Therefore I passed over the xlii, xliii, xlv, xlv, xlv, and part of xlvii, chapters, where the story of Joseph's dealing with his brethren, and Jacob's going down into Egypt is related, that I might connect the latter part of the account of Joseph's ordering the affairs of Egypt, which is delivered in chap. xlvii, from ver. 12 to 27, with the former part thereof. Which having done, let us now return, and see how in these hard times it fared with good Jacob, and his family, in the land of Canaan, for the famine raged in Canaan, as well as in Egypt; and they were in worse case who lived there, because there were no stores laid up, as there were in Egypt.

When Jacob understood that there was corn in Egypt, he said unto his sons, 'Why do ye look one

upon another? (like dispirited men, void of counsel) I hear there is corn in Egypt; therefore get ye down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may preserve our lives.'

Hereupon Joseph's ten brethren, leaving Benjamin, the youngest, with their father Jacob, who would not part with him, lest mischief might befall him, went down to Egypt to buy corn. And Joseph, who was the governor over the land, not trusting to deputies, but selling the corn out himself to those that came to buy, his brethren coming to treat with him for corn, bowed down themselves before him, with their faces towards the earth: thereby unwittingly beginning to fulfil what Joseph had before dreamed of them. Joseph no sooner saw his brethren, but he knew them; though they did not know him. Wherefore, remembering his dream concerning them, and being minded to try what effect some hard treatment would have upon them, to bring them to a sense of their unnatural dealing with him, using an interpreter to avoid suspicion, he roughly asked them, whence they came: they answering they came from Canaan to buy corn; he replied, 'Ye are spies, and are come to see the nakedness (that is, the weak and unguarded parts) of the land.' They submissively answered, 'Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.' And to take off the suspicion of their being spies, they added, 'We are all one man's sons: we are true men, thy servants are no spies.' Thereby suggesting the improbability of their being spies, being all brethren, the sons of one man; since no man in his right wits would send so many, and all his own children, upon such a capital enterprize. But Joseph, repeating the charge upon them, said, 'Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land are ye come.'*

This drew them, for clearing themselves, to open the state of the family further, by saying, 'Thy servants were twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold the youngest is this

day with our father, and one is dead.' Well, said Joseph, by this it shall appear whether ye are spies or no; ye now say ye have a younger brother: and, by the life of Pharaoh, ye shall not go hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Therefore send one of you, and let him fetch your brother; and ye shall be kept in prison in the mean time, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: otherwise, by the life of Pharaoh, (that is, as sure as Pharaoh lives) ye are spies.

Some, from this form of speech, 'by the life of Pharaoh,' charge Joseph with having learned and used an Egyptian oath. But Dr. Robert Sanderson, in his book *De Juramenti Obligatione*, prælect. 5, sect. 7, defends Joseph from having sworn, when he said to his brethren, 'by the life of Pharaoh.'

Joseph having told his brethren what they must trust to, put them all together into custody for three days: and on the third day, sending for them again, he let them know that he feared God, and would not that their families should suffer for their faults, nor that they should suffer if they were faultless. Therefore, said he, this do: 'If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; and go ye, carry corn, to prevent the famishing of your families. But see that ye bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and your lives preserved.' To this, not knowing otherwise how to help themselves, they all agreed. And thereupon falling into discourse amongst themselves, they could not but reflect on their evil usage of their brother Joseph, whom they all supposed to be dead. And they said one to another, 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that, though we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.' 'Ay,' said Reuben, 'did not I intreat you, that ye would not sin against the child, and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, his blood is now required.'

Joseph was present, and heard their discourse : for having spoken to them by an interpreter before, who was now absent, they spake freely to one another, as far from thinking he could understand them, as that he was their brother. But these words of theirs so affected good Joseph, that he could not forbear weeping : which, that his brethren might not observe, he turned away, and left them for a little while. Then returning, and, by his interpreter, communing farther with them, he took Simeon, the eldest next to Reuben, whom he spared, because he not only consented not to their evil design against him, but saved his life, and laboured to have delivered him, and causing him to be bound in their sight, he set the rest at liberty, who having their sacks, by his order filled with corn, and provision given them for their journey, laded their asses, and departed.

But as one of them, when they came to their inn upon the way, opened his sack, to give his ass provender, he espied his money in his sack's mouth, for Joseph had ordered his steward to put every one of their monies in his sack again. At sight of this, he calls out to the rest, and tells them his money was restored. This startle them all : their hearts began to fail, and fear seizing on them, they said one to another, 'What is this that God hath done unto us ?' For being conscious of their own guilt, they looked upon this as an additional judgment of God upon them for it, till they came home.

Being come to their father, they gave him an account of their journey, and of what had befallen them in it ; relating to him how the lord of the land had dealt with them, charging them with being spies, engaging them to bring their youngest brother with them, as a proof of their clearness, when they should come again, and keeping their brother Simeon bound in prison as a pledge, till they should bring Benjamin.

This news was very displeasing to Jacob ; but when, upon the emptying of their sacks, they found every man's bag of money in his sack, both Jacob and they

were all afraid, lest some new accusation would arise out of this, when the other, of their being spies, should be cleared. Jacob therefore, breaking forth in complaint, said, ‘Me have ye bereaved of my children : Joseph is not, and Simeon is not ; and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.’

Reuben, thinking to persuade his father to consent to Benjamin’s going, desired him to commit him to his care, promising to bring him safe to him again : which, said he, if I do not, slay thou my two sons, or two of my sons ; for he had four, named in Gen. xlv. 9 ; which went down afterwards with Jacob into Egypt.

Jacob needed not to be told how ill a recompence it would have been to him, for the loss of his son to kill his two grandsons : so that this proposal did but aggravate his grief, and make him resolve that his son Benjamin should not go down with them. ‘ For, said he, his brother Joseph (his only brother by the mother) is dead (so he and they all thought) and he is left alone : if mischief befall him by the way, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Thus it stood awhile with them. But the famine increasing sore upon them, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, ‘ Go again, buy us a little food :’ not taking any notice of the injunction laid upon them in Egypt, to bring their brother Benjamin with them, if they meant to have corn, or their brother Simeon back with them. The sons well knew it was in vain for them to go without Benjamin : and how to persuade their father to part with him was the difficulty.

Reuben had in vain tried his skill before ; wherefore Judah now attempts to draw his father to a compliance : and in order thereunto he thus bespake him :

If, said he, thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food : but if thou wilt not send him, it is in vain for us to go ; so I wish it might be read, rather than in that blunt manner, ‘ we will not go,’ not so decent from a son to a father. For, added he,

‘ the man did solemnly protest unto us, that we should not see his face, except our brother was with us.’

This pinched poor Jacob again, and drew from him a fresh complaint. ‘ Wherefore,’ said he, ‘ dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had another brother?’ They, to excuse themselves, answered, how truly doth not appear, ‘ The man asked us straitly of our state and of our kindred ; saying, Is your father yet alive? Have you another brother? and we answering him accordingly, could we certainly know beforehand that he would say, bring your brother down?’

Jacob beginning now to stagger, Judah said to him, ‘ Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go ; that we may live and not die, both thou and we, and our little ones. I will be surety for him, and at my hand shall thou require him : if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee ; then let me bear the blame forever.’

What neither their reason nor importunity could effect, necessity did. If there be no remedy, it must be so now, said their father to them, do this : ‘ Take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present ; a little balm, (or balsam) and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds,’ which, if any wonder they should be to be had in so great a famine, let it be considered, that this was but the second year of the seven ; there were five yet to come, Gen. xlv. 11. And these things not being used for common food, there might be some small quantity of the old stock remain. ‘ Take with you also, said he, double money in your hands,’ for he considered well, that as the famine increased, the price of corn would be likely to rise. And, added he, ‘ Carry with you again the money that was brought back in the mouths of your sacks ; for peradventure it was an oversight.’ Take also your brother Benjamin with you ; and arise, go again unto the man ; and, which shews where his hope lay, God Almighty give you mercy before the man, or incline him to be merciful to you, that he may send away your brother (Simeon)

and Benjamin. And now having committed all to God, 'If, said he, I be bereaved (of my children) I am bereaved.' As if he had said, I will trust providence, and quietly submit to God's divine disposal.

Now went they down cheerfully, having their brother Benjamin with them, the money that was in their sacks, to return it again, double money to buy with, and a present to appease the angry governor: and now they reckoned they could appear with some confidence before him.

When they were come into Egypt, and Joseph saw his brother Benjamin among them, he gave order to his steward, the ruler of his house, to bring them home, and make provision for them to dine with him at noon; which the steward accordingly did.

This put them into a new fright; and conferring together upon it, they concluded, that this was because of the money that was returned in their sacks before: and that therefore they were thus brought into the governor's house, that he might seek an occasion against them, to fall upon them, and both take them for bondmen, and seize upon their cattle. That therefore they might remove all offence about the return of their money, they drew near to the steward, and communing with him at the door, one of them, in the name of the rest, said, 'O, sir, when we came at the first to buy food, it came to pass that when (in our return) we opened our sacks, (one of us at our inn, by the way, and the rest of us when we came home) behold every man's money, in its full weight, was in the mouth of his sack: we cannot tell who put the money in our sacks; but we have brought it again; and we have brought other money also to buy food with.' The steward cheered them up, bidding them not fear; and to hide still the contrivance from them, told them, 'Their God, and the God of their father, had given them treasure in their sacks; for I, said he, had your money.' And finding them somewhat dejected, he, to comfort them, brought forth their brother Simeon to them; and gave order that water should be brought

to them, to wash their feet in; and that their cattle should be taken care of, and fed.

They meanwhile, understanding they should dine there, made ready their present against the governor should come in: and when he came, they presented him with it; bowing themselves to him to the earth. He asking them how they did, and if their father, the old man of whom they had spoken, when they were with him before, was yet alive and well: they answered, 'Thy servant, our father, is yet alive, and in good health;' and thereupon again they bowed down their heads and made obeisance. In doing which Joseph, no doubt, could not but observe, how inobservant soever they were, the accomplishment of his first dream, Gen. xxxvii. 7, wherein their sheaves made obeisance to his.

Then lifting up his eyes, for his affection would hardly suffer him to look stedfastly upon them, and seeing his brother Benjamin, the son of his mother, he asked, 'Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?' and not staying for an answer from them, said to him, 'God be gracious to thee, my son:' for his bowels did so yearn upon his brother, that he was fain to hasten from them, that he might seek a place to weep in. Retiring therefore into his chamber, he wept there; and having thereby given some vent to his passion, and washed his face, that it might not be observed that he had wept, he came forth again to them; and refraining himself from further tears, gave order that dinner should be brought in.

Accordingly, provision was made for him by himself, by the reason of the dignity of his place, and for all his brethren by themselves; and for the Egyptians who were to dine in his company, by themselves; because the Egyptians might not eat with the Hebrews, who were shepherds, that being an employment which the Egyptians did abominate, Gen. xli. 84.

All things being ready, the brethren sat down in Joseph's presence, according to the exact order of their births: and they marvelled one at another. The

reason of their marvelling not being expressed, leaves it uncertain whether they marvelled at the manner and order of the entertainment; or whether being placed not by themselves, as some think, but by Joseph, or his servants by his appointment, they marvelled how he came to understand the order of their ages, to dispose them so rightly in their due rank. However, finding themselves kindly entertained, for Joseph sent them every one a mess from his own table, and to Benjamin a mess five times as much as any of theirs, they drank freely, and were merry with him.

Now might they think the brunt was over; and that they should have no more storms or clouds, but pleasant sun-shine for the future: but alas! their sharpest trial was yet to come. They who were not enough sensible of the affliction of Joseph, were not yet enough afflicted themselves: they must be afflicted more. Wherefore Joseph commanded his steward to fill the men's sacks with food as much as they could carry; and put every man's money in his sack's mouth again: and, said he, 'put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, with his corn money.' Which accordingly was done, and early next morning, by that time it was light, they were sent away. But they were not gone far out of the city, when Joseph calling his steward, said to him, 'Up; follow after the men, and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this (viz. the cup which ye have stolen) that in which my lord drinketh, and whereby he will certainly find out what ye are? Ye have done evil in so doing.'

The steward, thus instructed, straightway pursued; and having overtaken them, charged them, as his lord had bidden him. They, knowing their clearness, made light of it, saying, 'Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do such a thing.' Then as an argument of their probity and just dealing, they reminded him of their having brought back the money which they found in their

sacks. 'Behold, said they, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought back again unto thee, out of the land of Canaan: how then is it likely we should steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?' But to put the matter out of all doubt, in confidence of their innocency, they offered themselves to the search, and that under the severest penalties. 'With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, said they, both let him die for it, and we also will all of us be my lord's bondmen.'

The steward took them at their word; but with this mitigation; 'He with whom it is found shall be my servant, said he, and the rest shall be blameless.' Then every one of them took down his sack; and as they opened he searched them, beginning at the eldest, and so going on to the youngest; and in poor Benjamin's sack the cup was found.

This was a plain conviction; at sight whereof amazement and sorrow took hold of them together: in token of which, they rent their clothes, and seeing no remedy, nor having any thing to say for themselves, they laded their asses again, and returned to the city.

Joseph, meanwhile, who without a cup could divine in whose sack the cup could be found, staid at home, expecting their coming; and when Judah and his brethren came into the house to him, they fell down before him on the ground: but before they could open their mouths to defend or excuse themselves, Joseph sternly said to them, 'What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I could certainly find you out?'

Although they were altogether innocent of this matter, yet so great a consternation and fear was on them, that they knew not what answer to make; till at length Judah thus abruptly brake forth.

'What shall we say unto my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold we are my lord's servants; both we and he also with whom the cup is found.'

Moses' wife, with their two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and brought them to him at the Israelitish camp. Where, after mutual salutations and embracings, Moses having given him a more particular account of the Lord's dealing with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and of what had befallen Israel in their travel thither; at which Jethro, being a devout man, as sprang from the loins of Abraham by Keturah, though not of the seed of promise, testified his joy, both by rendering solemn praise to God, with acknowledgment of his sovereignty, and offering a burnt offering, and sacrifices of thanksgiving to God: wherein Aaron, and all the elders of Israel, did join with him and feast together.

While Jethro tarried there, he observed that Moses was overcharged with the weight of business, in hearing and judging all the complaints and little wrangling differences of so great a people. Wherefore, being a wise and experienced prince, he advised his son-in-law to substitute certain subordinate officers, well qualified, men of ability, men of truth, such as feared God and hated covetousness, to be rulers, some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens, who should hear and end all the smaller matters among the people, and refer the greater and more weighty causes only to him: assuring him, that if, by God's approbation, he did follow this counsel, it would be better both for himself and the people. Moses liking well his father's advice, forthwith put it into practice, to the great ease both of himself and the people. And Jethro, taking his leave of his son-in-law, and the rest, returned into his own land.

While Israel lay encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, before the mount of God, the Lord there gave them the law, in ten commandments, thence called the Decalogue. The preparatory solemnities thereunto, are particularly set down in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus: and the Decalogue follows in chap. xx. After which follows divers judicial laws, intermixed with some ceremonial, and backed with promises of blessings upon obedience, in chap. xxi, xxii, xxiii.

All which Moses wrote in a book, and then read it to the people.

Which done, he, by God's command, brought up Aaron, with his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, so near that they saw the God of Israel; that is, by the glory exhibited, they were assured that God was present there. And this privilege those Israelitish nobles had, that though they appeared so near to the Divine Majesty, yet they were not smitten by it, but did survive the sight.

BUT God, having particular service for Moses, commanded him to come up to him into the mount, and tarry there. Moses therefore, taking only Joshua with him, went up into the mount, directing the elders to tarry for them till they should come down again, and referring them to Aaron and Hur for assistance, in any difficult cause that might be brought before them.

No sooner was Moses got up into the mount of God, but a cloud covered the mount, and the glory of the Lord abode upon it like devouring fire, in the sight of the children of Israel: and here the Lord kept Moses forty days and forty nights. In which time he received the tables of stone, whereon God himself had written the law; and he took direction from God, and was instructed how the tabernacle should be made, and all the vessels and instruments belonging thereunto; and the ark of the testimony, in which the law should be kept: and the altar with all its appurtenances; and how Aaron and his sons should be consecrated to the priesthood, and their priestly garments made, with divers other particulars, set down at large in chapters xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, xxix, xxx, and xxxi, of Exodus; whither I refer the reader.

While Moses was thus employed in the mount, Aaron and the people were worse employed in the camp. For the people, impatient of Moses' long absence, when they saw he delayed to come down out of the mount, (he had been forty days gone, and they knew not how many forty days more he might stay) they gathered themselves together unto Aaron, the

most part of them, and said, 'Up, make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses (the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt) we know not what is become of him.'

Aaron, who should have restrained them from this madness, and from whom better things might have been expected, having so lately been admitted to the sight of the divine glory, too easily complied; and without reproving, or expostulating with them, bid them 'break off the golden ear-rings, which were in the ears of their wives and children, (which probably were the same they had borrowed of the Egyptians, *Exod. xii. 35*) and bring them to him.' They brought them, he received them; and, melting them down into the figure or form of a calf, fashioned it with a graving tool. Which done, the people cried it up, 'These be, said they, thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.'

If it be asked, why he made it in the form of a calf, rather than of another creature? The answer is, it is probable he did it in imitation of the idol god they had seen worshipped by the Egyptians, called Apis, Serapis, and Osiris; having the form of an ox or bull, and, as some say, with a bushel on its head, in memory both of Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's providence.... See Goodwyn's *Moses and Aaron*, l. 4, c. 5. And D'Assigny's *History of Heathen Gods*, l. 2, p. 270, and l. 3, p. 38.

When Aaron saw how much the people were taken with their golden god, he built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast to be holden next day to the Lord. Not much unlike those inhabitants of Samaria, who long after are said to have feared the Lord, and yet served their graven images, *2 Kings xvii. 48*.

The people, however, made a revelling feast of it indeed: for after they had offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, betimes in the morning, 'they sat them down to eat and to drink, and when they were full they rose up to play.'

Little thought good Moses what was doing in the camp. He left all things in a very good posture, the

people having newly entered into a solemn league and covenant with God, and bound themselves with one voice, 'All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient,' chap. xxiv. 3 and 7. And now, all on a sudden, the Lord bid Moses be gone, 'Go, get thee down, said God to Moses: for thy people (so he calls them, as disdaining now to own them to be his) which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves, and have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them.'

Then telling him in particulars what they had done, he added, 'I have seen this people (in many instances) to be stiff-necked (like the ox they would worship). Now therefore let me alone, plead not any longer with me for them, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.'

This perhaps would have pleased some; but poor Moses it cut to the heart: wherefore he earnestly besought the Lord his God on their behalf. And whereas God had called them his people, he takes hold of the expression, calling them his people: 'Lord, said he, why doth thy wrath wax hot against (not mine, but) thy people; which (not I, but) thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians blaspheme, and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains? Turn therefore, I beseech thee, from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, (wrestling and prevailing Israel) thy servants, to whom thou didst swear by thine own self, saying, I will multiply your seed, as the stars of heaven; and all this land, which I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.'

We read elsewhere how effectual the fervent prayer of a righteous man is, Jam. v. 16, of which instances are there given; but if no other instance had been given but this, here is a signal one. For, upon this deprecation of Moses, it is said, 'The Lord repented

of the evil which he thought to have done unto his people.'

Moses, having thus far prevailed with the Lord, hastens down from the mount, having in his hand the two tables of the testimony, which were written or graven on both sides by the finger of God. And as he went, his servant Joshua, so he was, and so he is called, *Exod. xxxii. 11*, who had attended him all this while in the mount, hearing the noise of the people as they shouted, observed to Moses that there was a noise of war in the camp. But Moses said, 'The noise which I hear is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, nor of them that cry for quarter: but of them that sing.' But as he came so near that he saw the calf, and the people dancing before it, his anger was so kindled, that casting the tables out of his hands, that he might lay hold on the calf, he brake them beneath the mount. Then taking the calf which they had made, he first, to deface it, burnt it in the fire; then, to destroy it, ground it to powder; and strowing the powder upon the water, made the children of Israel drink of it: perhaps that he might make them the more sensible of their folly, in worshipping that as a god, which should pass through their bodies into the draught.

Some, it may be, may think Moses a little too zealous, in destroying the matter or substance whereof this calf was made; and that the form being defaced and altered, so great a mass of gold might have been put to a better use. But the things that had been devoted or dedicated to, and used in idolatry, were to be utterly destroyed, *Exod. xxxiv. 13*; *Numb. xxxiii. 52*, *Deut. vii. 5*: 'The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire. Thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them; nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thy house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it; but thou shalt utterly detest it; and

thou shalt utterly abhor it: for it is a cursed thing,' Deut. vii. 25, 26, see also Deut. xii. 2, 3.

Now began Aaron to contrive how to excuse himself. When therefore Moses, calling him to account for what he had done, asked him, 'What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?' he desired Moses not to be angry, puts him in mind that he knew the people were bent on mischief. Then tells him a lame story, that when the people had brought him their gold, he threw it into the fire, and there came out that calf, as if the calf had made itself. Whereas the text is plain and positive, that he made it a molten calf, that is, melted down the gold into a mould of a calf, and then fashioned it more exactly, with a graving tool.

Moses stood not long to reason the case with Aaron. But seeing that he had made the people naked, had stripped them of the defence and protection, which God's presence and protection had been to them and that too amongst their enemies, who might thence take encouragement to fall upon them, he went and stood in the midst of the camp; and calling out, said, 'Who is on the Lord's side? let him come out unto me.' Whereupon we read, that 'all the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him,' ver. 26. But since it appears from ver. 29, and from Deut. xxxiii. 9, that some of Levi's sons were in the idolatry, interpreters rather conclude that all they that did gather to him were of the sons of Levi, though not that whole tribe.

It may well be thought that Moses knew that God would not pass by this so great sin, and high provocation, without some exemplary punishment upon the offenders, either by pestilence or some other way, as exposing them to their enemies, or the like, which he feared might fall heavy upon the whole people; and that therefore, as some sort of atonement, and to appease the anger of the Lord towards Israel, he gave charge to these Levites, which came to him to 'arm themselves and go in and out from gate to gate, through the camp, and slay every man his brother,

companion, and neighbour :’ suppose it be meant of them who they knew were actually engaged in that idolatry.

The Levites thus commissioned, fell briefly on : so that there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. Which though the Lord was pleased to accept for the present, yet he would not discharge the people, but threatened them, that ‘in the day when he should visit, he would visit this their sin upon them :’ and he did afterwards, upon fresh provocations, remember this, and added to their punishments, because of this calf ; which the people are said to have made, because they proposed it, and put Aaron upon it ; and Aaron is said to have made, because he, at their requiring, wrought it. The Jews have a saying among themselves, that no punishment befalleth Israel, in which there is not an ounce of this calf.

After this execution was done, Moses, returning to the Lord, acknowledged Israel’s sin, and begged forgiveness for it : which he did with that earnestness and concern of spirit, as to pray God ‘to blot him out of his book,’ if he would not forgive them. But the Lord, who knew how repugnant that was to his justice, gave him this short answer, ‘Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.’ A puzzling place to the strict Predestinarians.

The Lord then commanded Moses to lead on the people to the place he had appointed ; but withall let him know he was not willing to go along with them, seeing they were such a stiff-necked people, lest they should provoke him to consume them in the way. Yet he told him he would send his angel before him, to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land, that so he might perform the oath he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

When the people heard these evil tidings, that God would withdraw his immediate presence, and turn them over to an angel’s guidance, they mourned ; and in token of humbling themselves, they forbore to put on their ornaments. And Moses, to humble them the

more, and make them the more sensible of their sin, took a tent, and pitching it without the camp, called it the tabernacle of the congregation: thereby intimating to them, that the Lord was so highly offended with them for their idolatry, that he removed from them, and would not now dwell amongst them, as he had done before. By this means, every one that sought the Lord was obliged to go to this tabernacle without the camp. And when Moses himself went out to it, as he entered into it, the cloudy pillar, in which the Lord used to appear, descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle.

The people now more heedfully attended Moses' motion; and therefore when he went out to the tabernacle, they rose up, and stood every one at his tent door, looking after him, till he was gone in. And when they saw the cloudy pillar, which they knew was a token of God's presence, they all worshipped.

Here the Lord talked with Moses, and permitted Moses to talk with him familiarly, which, to accommodate the speech to man's capacity, is expressed to be, face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend: which favour Moses improved to the people's advantage, labouring with much intreaty to reconcile the Lord unto them.

After which the Lord having, at Moses' request, and to comfort and encourage him under his many exercises, shewn him so much of his glory as Moses was capable of seeing; he bid him prepare two new tables of stone, like unto the former, which he had broken, and come up himself alone with them in the morning unto Mount Sinai; 'and I, said he, will write upon these tables the words that were in the first.'

When therefore Moses had hewn the tables, and presented himself with them before the Lord, the Lord descending in the cloud, proclaimed, according to his promise, *Exod. xxxiii. 19*, the name of the Lord. And passing by before him, that he might not too much deject the people, through a sense of the severity of his jus-

tice, he proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving (or taking away) iniquity, transgression and sin.’ But that none from so gracious a promulgation of mercy, might presume to offend with impunity, he added, ‘And that will by no means clear the guilty: but will visit the iniquities of the fathers, upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,’ Exod. xx, and Deut. v. 9. Thereby giving them to understand that his mercy, though so transcendentally extensive, would not protect or secure wilful and impenitent sinners.

This heavenly proclamation made, Moses makes haste, not only to bow and worship, but taking hold of the grace and mercy proclaimed, to intercede again for his people, as God was pleased to call them, Exod. xxxii. 7, not only that the Lord would pardon their iniquity, but would vouchsafe, with his own presence, to accompany them.

The Lord hereupon was intreated, and prevailed with to renew his covenant with his people. And having briefly, but with great majesty, set forth the marvellous things he would do for them in driving out their enemies before them, he gave them divers precepts, as the conditions of the covenant, which they should carefully observe and keep. Amongst these, that which, as being of greatest moment, obtained the first place, was,

That they should not mix with any other people.... Which command, inasmuch as it is of great weight, and extends to God’s people, in all times and places, deserves more particularly to be here inserted.

‘Take heed to thyself, said God to his people, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee. But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves. For thou shalt worship no other God: for the Lord, whose name is JEHOVAH, is a jealous God. Lest thou make a

covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice, and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.'

Now when Moses had been with the Lord in the mount forty days and forty nights, and had received of the Lord the law of the ten commandments, written on the tables of stone, and many other precepts, relating to the observation of the sabbath, and other appointed feasts, and other things belonging to the Jewish worship, with directions also for the making of the tabernacle, &c. (in which time he did neither eat bread nor drink water, verifying in practice that saying of our Lord long after, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' Mat. iv. 4) he went down from the mount, and delivered these laws to the people.

But he knew not that, with God's talking with him, the skin of his face had contracted a splendor, or shining brightness casting forth as it were irradiations, or beams. Whence not only the vulgar Latin renders Moses' face *cornuta*, horned; but Moses was wont of old to be pictured with horns on his head. However it was, certain it is, that, at the first sight, Aaron and the Israelites were afraid to come nigh him, and turned away from him; probably not knowing him, until he spake: for after he had called unto them, it is said, Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him, and he talked with them. When therefore Moses understood that there was a brightness upon his face, he put a veil upon it, to cover that glory which the people could not behold; and afterwards all the children of Israel coming nigh, he gave them in command all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And from thenceforward, during the time that that lustre remained upon his face, he put off the veil when he went in to speak with the Lord, and put it on again when he came forth.

to speak unto the people. From which use of the veil, the apostle Paul, shewing the difference between the law and the gospel, elegantly compares that to Moses' face obscured with a veil; this, to his face unveiled and brightly shining.

Amongst divers other precepts which, beside the Decalogue, were now given, one was, that thrice every year, at three solemn feasts, all the males, or men children of the Israelites, should appear before the Lord, at the place which he should choose to place his name in.

This, to the eye of human reason, might seem hazardous; and they being fighting men, might have doubted how, in a fighting age, and environed with fighting enemies, their wives and families, their goods and possessions, should be secured from invasions or depredations, when all their borders and frontier places should be left unguarded and destitute of men. But God anticipated the objection, by telling them, at the same time that he gave them the command, that he would cast out the nations before them, and enlarge their borders: nor only so, but added, 'Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.' Hence then may be observed, that they who in the faith obey God, and rely on him, may expect and find protection without arms, and defence without fighting.

At this time also did Moses acquaint the people with the Lord's command, that they should bring in their offerings, being materials for the making of the tabernacle, the particulars whereof are enumerated in ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, of this chapter, as they were before in Exodus xxv. For when Moses went into the mount the first time, God gave him the same direction about the tabernacle: but by reason of the people's transgression in the calf, it was not then delivered to them.

This offering was not to be exacted; but they might receive it of every one that gave it with a willing heart. And the Lord so inclined and opened the

hearts of the people, that they brought in their offerings in great abundance. So that the officers appointed to receive them, making report to Moses, that the people had brought in much more than enough for the service of the work, proclamation was made that no more should be brought, *Exod. xxxvi. 5, 6*; so that their liberality was restrained.

The materials thus conferred, were delivered to Bezaleel, whom the Lord had called by name, and had filled with the spirit of God in wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in all manner of workmanship: who, with Aholiah, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, and whose heart stirred him up to do it, undertook the work, and finished it. Nor were the women excluded; but had their share, both in the offerings, *Exod. xxxviii. 8*, and in the work of the Lord (not every woman, as not every man, but) all the women that were wise hearted; all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom, *chap. xxxv. 25, 26*.

Now when the whole work was finished and brought to Moses, and he, having viewed it, found that they had done it as the Lord had commanded, he blessed them.

And on the first day of the first month, in the second year after they came out of Egypt, the tabernacle was by God's command set up; and all its furniture disposed in the proper places.* Which done, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord filled it. So that for a while, even Moses was not able to enter into it: and this cloud was the signal to the people of Israel, by which they knew both when to march, and when to rest. For when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel journeyed: but if the cloud were not taken up, they journeyed not until it was.

* A. M. 2515.

THE

Book of Leviticus:

so called,

BECAUSE IT TREATS OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI, AND THE THINGS BELONGING TO THEIR OFFICE: IT CONTAINS ABOUT ONE MONTH'S TIME.

AFTER the tabernacle was set up, the altar fitted, and all things prepared for public worship, the Lord proceeded to give direction to Moses, and by him to the people, how, when, with what, by whom, and in what manner, his worship under that dispensation should be performed; which being set forth at large from the first chapter to the eighth, and the consecration of Aaron and his sons in chapter eighth, the ninth chapter gives account of the first burnt offerings that were offered by Aaron, first for himself, and then for the people. To which the Lord was pleased to give a miraculous testimony, by causing the fire to come out from before the Lord, which consumed the burnt offering upon the altar; in the sight of the people. Whereupon the people shouted, for joy that God had so signally owned the offering, and in reverence bowed themselves.

The fire thus kindled ought to have been kept burning, and not to have been let go out, for so had the Lord expressly commanded. 'The fire upon the altar

shall be burning in it ; it shall not be put out ; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning :.....The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar ; it shall never go out,' Levit. vi. 12, 13.

But Nadab and Abihu, the two elder sons of Aaron the priest, forgetful of their charge and duty, whether having let it go out, or not regarding the holy fire, took either of them his censer, (an instrument somewhat like a little fire-shovel, made at first of brass, afterwards of gold) and putting common fire therein, laid incense thereon, and so offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. Whereupon there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, so that they died before the Lord, Levit. x.

From whence may be observed,

1. That in religious performances, all fire which is not from the Lord, and of his own kindling, is but strange fire to him.

2. That to do or perform any thing, as a part of religious worship to God, which he hath not commanded, is to offer strange fire before him.

3. That the Lord will not accept such offerings as are made with false fire : but his fire will devour them that offer the false fire, and they will die before the Lord, though they may not then die outwardly before men.

This breach in Aaron's family, and young priesthood, must needs be a sore affliction to Aaron. But he might remember the calf ; and perhaps did : for he held his peace when Moses told him, ' This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me ; and before all the people I will be glorified.'

Moses, however, having called some of the kindred, and ordered them to carry the dead bodies from before the sanctuary, out of the camp, which they did in their coats, without funeral pomp ;* gave charge to Aaron, and his other two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, that they should not use any of those tokens to express

their grief or mourning which were then in fashion, as uncovering the head, and rending the clothes. Which may be a good instruction and warning to others, to beware of murmuring or extreme sorrowing, when the hand of the Lord comes near in judgment.

Whether those sons of Aaron had too far indulged themselves in the use of wine, or other strong liquors, might have made them forgetful of their duty, doth not plainly appear. Yet some of the Jewish doctors, Dr. Gell says, plainly affirm it. And there is some ground to suspect it; because as soon as they were carried out, the Lord charged Aaron and his sons, on pain of death, not to drink wine or strong drink, when they were to go into the tabernacle of the congregation; telling them, it shall be a statute throughout all their generations. And he assigns there the reason of this so strict prohibition, 'That ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean; and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes, which the Lord hath spoken to them by Moses.'

After this follow many temporary laws, fitted to that dispensation and people; as the distinction of meats, the law of purifications, Levit. xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii; of persons unclean, by leprosy, or otherwise; to which are added, divers other laws relating to their offerings. And in chapter eighteen, the boundaries of marriage are set; first in general: 'None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness; I am the Lord.' After which follows an enumeration of divers degrees, in particulars prohibited. Which specialties do not restrain the general prohibition to those particular degrees only: but the general prohibition extends by analogy to all other degrees, though not mentioned, of like nearness with any of them that are there mentioned; and generally to all that is near of kin. Besides, since in ver. 3, the children of Israel are positively forbidden, 'To do after the doings of the land of Egypt,' (from whence they came) or 'After

the doings of the land of Canaan,' (whither they were then going); all such near degrees of kindred, as among Egyptians or Canaanites were permitted to join in marriage, may reasonably be supposed to be comprehended under this general prohibition.

The rest of this book is spent partly in repeating laws given before, partly in giving new laws, some judicial, most ceremonial; divers typifying the sincerity, purity, holiness, and perfection of gospel worship and worshippers, those especially which more directly concerned that legal priesthood taken out of the tribes of Levi. From the ordering of which, this book was called Leviticus, Levit. xix, xx, xxi, xxii.

It affords not much of historical matter. Yet in chap. xxiv, a relation is given of one whose mother's name was Shelomith, an Israelitish woman, of the tribe of Dan: but his father, it seems, was an Egyptian; and supposed to be a proselyte to Israel.

This young man, going out of his tent among the children of Israel, happened to fall out with a man of Israel, so that they wrestled or strove together; and Shelomith's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. Whereupon being apprehended, and brought before Moses, he was committed to custody, till the mind of the Lord should be known concerning him. For though the third command in the Decalogue forbids the taking of the name of the Lord in vain, yet this blasphemous cursing being an offence of an higher strain, against which no positive law was yet provided, Moses had recourse to the Lord for counsel and direction therein. 'And the Lord said, bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him;' which accordingly was done. And a law was thereupon made, that he who thenceforward should blaspheme the name of the Lord, whether he were an Israelite or a stranger, should be stoned to death.*

* A. M. 2515.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

THE

Book of Numbers:

so called,

FROM NUMBERING THE PEOPLE: CONTAINING AN HISTORY OF SOMEWHAT MORE THAN THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS.

ISRAEL was yet in their old station, in the wilderness of Sinai, to which they came from Rephidim, in the third month after they came out of Egypt, Exod. xix. 1, 2; and had tarried there till now, which was the beginning of the second month, in the second year of their coming out of Egypt.

While they lay encamped here, the Lord appointed Moses to take Aaron, and with him one principal man of every tribe, whom the Lord pitched on by name, and make a general muster of the men of war. 'Take ye, said he, the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by the poll, from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel; thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.'

Moses therefore and Aaron, with their assistants in this service, having taken an exact account by the poll, of all the males from twenty years old and upwards, that were able to go forth to war in Israel, found the number to be 'Six hundred and three thousand five

hundred and fifty men,' Numb. i; without and besides the Levites. For the whole tribe of Levi God had expressly exempted out of this muster, because he had designed them to the peculiar service of the tabernacle; not only to take the charge thereof, and of all the vessels belonging thereunto, but to take down the tabernacle upon every remove, and to carry both the tabernacle, and the vessels thereof, and set it up again when they pitched anew.

By this we may give a guess how much this people were increased in number in this year's time, notwithstanding they had been in a travelling condition, had had a fight with Amalek, (wherein probably some of them might fall, while Amalek prevailed, Exod. xvii. 11) and had lost about three thousand men upon the score of their calf. For they were computed to be but about six hundred thousand men, including the tribe of Levi with them, when they came out of Egypt, Exod. xxii. 37. And now they were six hundred three thousand five hundred and fifty men, besides the tribe of Levi; which, being numbered by itself, yielded two and twenty thousand males, of a month old and upwards, Numb. iii. 39.

From this numbering of the people, this book, which gives the account thereof, is called Numbers.

This general muster being made, the order and manner of their encamping follows:

They were disposed, or marshalled, into four great bodies, or battalions, each under one general standard; and were so placed, that they encompassed and enclosed the tabernacle. For that being first pitched, the standard of the camp of Judah, under which were the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon, pitched over against it, on the east side of it towards the rising of the sun.

On the south side was the standard of the camp of Reuben; under which were the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad.

On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim; under which were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

And on the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan; under which were the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, Numb. ii.

Some tell us, and not without good shew of reason, that between each tribe, in every one of those four quarters or camps, there were left distant spaces like streets, for buying and selling.... See Goodwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. 6, c. 8. The distance also between these four great camps and the tabernacle, is supposed to be two thousand cubits, or a mile, on every side; which may be gathered from Josh. iii. 4.

In this vacant distance, between the four great camps and the tabernacle, were pitched four lesser camps, consisting of the priests and Levites, nearer the tabernacle, in and about which their service lay.... 'The Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of the testimony,' Numb. i. 53. These were thus disposed:

On the east side did encamp Moses and Aaron, with Aaron's sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary, Numb. iii.

On the south side where the Kohathites, a part of the Levites, descended and taking name from Kohath, the second son of Levi.

On the west side, behind the tabernacle, stood the Gershonites, another part of the Levites from Gershon, Levi's eldest son.

And on the north side were planted the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, sprung from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

This was the order in which they stood encamped. The manner of their dislodging and marching follows not yet in the text; some other things, relating to the Levites' services, and other matters, being interposed. But because there is some connection of matter, in the Israelites' encamping and discamping, I am willing to connect the relations of them here.

When they were to remove and march, which was when the cloud was taken off the tabernacle, the trumpet was sounded; and upon the first alarm, the

standard of the camp of Judah being raised, the three tribes which were under that standard set forward, Numb. x.

Then the tabernacle being taken down, the Gershonites and the Merarites set forward, bearing the tabernacle, that is, the boards and staves of the tabernacle, in waggons, which the princes of the tribes, at the erecting of the tabernacle, had offered to the Lord, and he had appointed to that service, Numb. vii. 2 to 9.

These being on their march, a second alarm was given by sound of trumpet. Whereupon the standard of Reuben's camp set forward, with the three tribes that belonged to it.

And after them followed the Kohathites, bearing the sanctuary; which being more holy, and less cumbersome to carry, than the boards and staves of the tabernacle, was not to be put in waggons, but borne on their shoulders.

Next followed the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the tribes under it. And last of all, the other three tribes, under the standard of Dan, brought up the rear.

Having thus taken a brief survey of the Israelites, both in their camps and marches, let us now look back to those chapters we stepped over, and observe what is most memorable in them.

There we have the Lord's taking the Levites to himself, in exchange for the first born, with the reason of his so doing; and his giving the Levites to the priests, for the service of the tabernacle; distributing them into three classes or orders, and appointing them their several services, set forth at large, in chap. iii, and iv.

After which follows that clear and excellent type of gospel purity, and Christian church discipline, expressed in God's commanding the children of Israel to put out of the camp every leper, and every one that had a running issue, and whosoever was defiled by the dead, both male and female, that they might not defile their camps, in the midst of which the Lord dwelled.

Then follow divers laws relating to restitution in cases of trespass, and to the trial of jealousy between men and their wives ; as also to the vow of Nazarites. To which is subjoined the form of that divine blessing, which the Lord himself did dictate, for the priests to pronounce upon the people, in chap. vi.

The offerings of the princes, at the dedication both of the tabernacle and the altar, &c. are set down at length in the seventh chapter. The consecration and purification of the Levites in chapter eight. A reinforcement of the passover ; and the guidance of the Israelites by the cloud, in chapter nine. Which brings us to the order of both their encamping and marching, in chapter ten, of which we have taken a view before.

To proceed now therefore from the order of action. The people, having lain a pretty while before the mount of the Lord, did now depart from thence ; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting-place for them. At the setting forward of the ark, Moses said, ‘ Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.’ And when the ark rested again, he added, ‘ Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.’ Three days’ journey they now marched, till they came to a place which afterwards was called Kibroth-Hattaavah, or the graves of lust, from a doleful occasion, which was this :

The people were got again into a murmuring humour, and began to grumble and complain. Which the Lord hearing, and being displeased at, his anger was kindled, and that kindled a fire among them, which consumed such of them as were in the outermost parts of the camp. The people hereupon cried to Moses ; and Moses prayed to the Lord on their behalf ; whereupon the fire was quenched, and the name of that place called Taberah, which signifies a burning, because the fire of the Lord burned among them, Numb. xi.

This seems to have befallen them in their journey between station and station, as they were travelling

from Sinai to Kibroth-Hattaavah. And this, one would think, might have been a fair warning to them, and have taught them to be quiet.

But they were a dissatisfied people, and loved to indulge their appetites, which often cost them dear; and so now. For being come to new quarters, they expected better fare; and so gave scope to their appetites, to lust after that which was not fit for them. This lusting first began, it seems in the mixed multitude that was amongst them (of which we read, Exod. xii. 38, that a mixed multitude went up out of Egypt with them); and the Israelites being in a discontented temper, too readily fell in with them, saying, 'Who shall give us flesh to eat?'

Then, to heighten each other's discontent they call to mind the brave fare (as they now thought it) which they had had in Egypt: but say not a word of their burdens, their labour and their toil in Egypt in getting stubble, and making and burning brick; nor the blows and stripes they had received, for not doing their tasks. 'We remember, said they one to another, the flesh we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlick.' Thus they gloried in their Egyptian fare, both meat and sauce; commending their condition in Egypt, and wishing they had not come from thence.

But to shew their dislike and contempt of their present food, which God provided for them, every morning fresh and fresh, they said, 'But now our life is dried away: for we have nothing to eat, but this manna.' This they uttered weeping; but with such a tone, that it is said, 'Moses heard the people weep, throughout their families, every man at the door of his tent:' at which Moses was displeased; but the Lord's anger was kindled greatly.

Moses hereupon taking occasion to pour forth his grief before the Lord, and to complain of the weight of the burden, which the care of so numerous and discontented a people brought upon him, the Lord was graciously pleased to provide a remedy; directing

him to choose out seventy men of the elders of Israel, and bring them with him to the tabernacle of the congregation. 'And there, said the Lord, I will come down and talk with thee; and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them: and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.'

Hence may be observed,

1. That there is a spirit of government.
2. That this spirit of government is of God, comes from him, is given by him.
3. That he transfers this spirit of government from one to another, as he pleases.
4. That none are fit to govern God's people, though they be elders, till they have received this spirit of government from God.
5. That they who have received this spirit of government, are thereby distinguished from others that have it not, and from what they themselves were before they had it.

For as soon as Moses had brought the seventy elders before the Lord, and the Lord had taken of the spirit that was upon him, and given it unto them; while the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied.... Nay, two of those seventy, though they came not out with the rest of the tabernacle, but remained behind in the camp; yet, not doing it in a gainsaying or opposite mind, they were taken in among the rest, and received of the spirit, as the others did; and prophesied in the camp, as the others prophesied at the tabernacle.

The unusualness of this caused a young man to run from the camp to the tabernacle, to acquaint Moses, that Eldad and Medad (so were they named) were prophesying in the camp.* Which message Joshua, Moses' servant, another young man, who was not yet so thoroughly acquainted with the way of the Lord's working, as afterwards he came to be, over-hearing, and thinking it some derogation from his master that

* A. M. 2515,

they should prophesy, and not follow him, advised his master to forbid them; but was presently stopped with this gentle reproof, 'Dost thou envy for my sake? Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets, so that the Lord would put his spirit upon them.'

As to the people's demand of flesh, which in his complaint Moses had spread before the Lord, the Lord ordered Moses to bid them prepare themselves against to-morrow, for they should have flesh enough. 'The Lord will give you flesh, said he, and ye shall eat, not one day only, nor two days, nor five, nor ten, nor twenty; but for a whole month together, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because ye have despised the Lord, who is among you (in despising and loathing his provision); and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?'

It was hard to Moses to apprehend how such a numerous host should be fed with flesh so long together, in such a place as they were in. 'The people, said he to God, amongst whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen (nay, they were six hundred three thousand five hundred and fifty, besides the tribe of Levi, and besides women and children); and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? Or, shall all the fish in the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?'

The Lord considered the greatness of Moses' exercise, and therefore bore with him; and only giving him this gentle rebuke, 'Is the Lord's hand waxed short?' added, 'Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.'

Accordingly, when Moses with the elders was gone back to the camp, and had acquainted the people with it, 'There went forth a wind, (not a common wind, but) a wind from the Lord, which brought quails from the sea, and let them fall about a day's journey off, (understand it of a sabbath day's journey, which some

suppose to be a mile, some two miles) round about the camp, where they lay upon the ground two cubits (which supposing it to be spoken of the common, which is the shortest cubit, is a yard) high.'

Forthwith the people fell eagerly to gathering up the quails; and all that day, all that night, and all the next day they spent about it; every one gathering great and almost incredible quantities. Nor may we suppose they were less greedy in eating them. 'But while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and he smote them with a very great plague.' Thus, when people provoke the Lord, by not being satisfied with what he gives them, but craving that which they should not have, they sometimes have their requests granted, in judgment to them; and what they so obtain oft times proves a plague to them. Here they buried those of the people, who, for lusting after flesh, were smitten with the plague: and from thence the place was called Kibroth-Hattaavah: which signifies 'the graves of lust.'

This was no good place to stay in: from hence therefore the people journied to Hazeroth, which signifies palaces. But here another unhappy accident befell them, occasioned thus:

Moses had married Jethro's daughter, who was a Midianitess; and some squabble, it is supposed, had happened, or evil emulation risen, between Zipporah, Moses' wife, and Miriam his sister. However it was, Miriam taking occasion, partly from his having married this wife, who, though she came of Abraham by Keturah, yet was not by birth an Israelite, and partly from his eminent station in the camp, and among the people, vented her displeasure upon her brother Moses. And she having begun, her brother Aaron fell in with her, in speaking against their brother Moses, Numb. xii.

'And Miriam and Aaron, the text says, spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian woman that

he had married.' So, in contempt, they called her, as if she had indeed been an Ethiopian, because the Midianites bordered upon the Ethiopians. This, as being more specious, they made the pretence of their quarrel; but the ground or bottom of it seems to have been an emulation of his gifts and authority. For they added, 'What! hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?' As if they had said, 'Wherein is Moses better than we, that he should be so set up? Am not I, Miriam, elder than he, and a prophetess? (so she is called, *Exod. xv. 20.*) And am not I, Aaron the high-priest, and elder than he also? Why must we be overlooked, and he be all in all?'

Moses was not ignorant of their discontent and detraction; and though no man was more sensible than he, or readier to resent an indignity offered to the Lord, yet looking upon this as a personal pique at himself, he would not take notice of it. But the Lord, who sees and hears all things, is said (after the manner of men) to have heard this their reproach and contempt of his servant Moses; and he would not put it up. Wherefore, on a sudden, calling forth Moses, Aaron, and Miriam before him, at the door of the tabernacle, he there, before Moses, gave them a sharp rebuke, asking them, 'Wherefore they were not afraid to speak against his servant Moses?' And to presume to equal themselves to him, who was more than an ordinary prophet? Then departing from them in high displeasure, he smote Miriam (who in this case was the prime offender) with leprosy; so that Aaron looking on her, saw she was white as snow. He therefore presently applied himself to Moses, whom they had so lately despised; and confessing their sin, begged his pardon, and interceded for his sister.

Good Moses thereupon cried unto the Lord, beseeching him to heal her. But the Lord would make her an example, that others might be wary how they moved sedition in the camp. Therefore he gave order, that (though she was Miriam) she should be shut out

from the camp for the space of seven days, as every common leper and all unclean persons were, and then to be received in again. This made the people tarry longer in this place than otherwise they would have done; for they journied not till Miriam was brought in again; and then they removed from Hazeroth, and took up their next station at Rithmah, in the wilderness of Paran.

From thence by many removes, and about seventeen several stations, (which see in Numb. xxxiii, from ver. 19 to 36) they came at length to Kadesh-barnea. And here Moses let them know that they were now come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord their God had given them; and that the Lord their God had set the land before them (that is, had brought them just to the border of it): wherefore he bade them go up and possess it, as the Lord God of their fathers had said they should; and not fear, nor be discouraged, Deut. i, ver. 20, 21. But truly they began to draw back, and proposed the sending of certain men beforehand to search out the land, and bring them word by what way they must go up, and what cities they should go into.

The Lord therefore, to try them to the full, condescended thereunto; and bade Moses send men, one chosen out of every tribe, to search the land of Canaan. Moses thereupon chose out twelve men, that were heads of the children of Israel, who are there named, and sent them forth to spy the land, Num. xiii.

Their instruction was to go up southward in the land of Canaan, and see and observe what kind of country it was; what sort of people dwelt in it; whether they were lusty, large, strong-bodied men; or small, weak, feeble folks; and whether the inhabitants were few or many; whether they generally dwelt in tents and open villages, or in strong holds; and of what strength their cities were. Then as to the soil itself, whether the land was fat or lean, fruitful or barren; and whether the country was woody, or an open champaign country.*

* A. M. 2515.

Thus instructed and exhorted to be courageous, and bring with them some of the fruit of the land, they set forward, probably two and two together, both that they might pass less observed, and might have the better opportunity of viewing the land more fully.... And having coasted the country from south to north, in their return coming to a rich valley, they there cut down a branch of a vine, having one cluster of grapes upon it; but that of so great bigness and weight, that they were obliged to carry it upon a staff between two. The name of that place was afterwards called the valley of Eschol, which signifies a cluster of grapes; because of the cluster they there cut off.

Having spent forty days in searching the land, they returned with their load of grapes, and some pomegranates and figs, and came to the camp of Israel at Kadesh, where they left it. And having shewed the fruits of the land to Moses, Aaron, and the whole congregation, they related the observations they had made in their journey.

But in giving the account thereof, they who undertook that province, though they were forced to acknowledge the goodness and richness of the land, which the fruits they had brought were a proof of; yet they followed that acknowledgment with a discouraging, nevertheless:

‘Nevertheless, said they, the people be strong that dwell in the land; and the cities are walled and very great.’ Neither is that all, or the worst: ‘But moreover, we saw the children of Anak there.’ Then reckoning up the strength of their enemies: ‘The Amalekites, said they, dwell in the south part of the land; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites in the mountains, and the Canaanites by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.’

This was frightful news to a faint-hearted people, prepared by their own discontents to receive ill impressions from others. And doubtless they quickly shewed their unruliness: for we read in the next words, that Caleb, with whom Joshua joined, did what

he could to still the people before Moses; saying, 'Let us go up by all means, and possess the country, for we are well able to overcome it.'

But the other ten spies told the people, 'We are not able to go up against that people: for they are stronger than we.' And whereas before they had spoken well of the land itself, confessing it was assuredly a land flowing with milk and honey, yet now, to beget in the people an ill opinion of it, they say, in contradiction to themselves, 'It is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.' And to terrify the people the more, they tell them of the giants they saw there, the sons of Anak, in comparison of whom, they hyperbolically say, they were in their sight, and in their own also, but as grasshoppers or locusts. Nay, they stretch so far as to tell them, that 'all the people they saw in the land were men of great stature.'

This put the whole camp into great disorder. Some fell a roaring, others a weeping, all a murmuring against Moses and Aaron. 'Would God we had died in the land of Egypt: or would God we had died in the wilderness,' said the whole congregation. Nor stopped their rage at Moses and Aaron, but rose higher: they struck at God himself, obliquely charging him with breach of promise, Numb. xiv. 'Wherefore, said they, hath the Lord brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?' As if they had said, he promised to give us this land, and to settle us quietly in it; and now instead of that, after so long a travel, and so many hardships as we have undergone to come to it, he hath brought us hither to be cut in pieces by these monstrous giants. To avoid this danger, 'Were it not better, said some to the rest, for us to return into Egypt?' To that proposition these mutineers could readily listen: and they said one to another, 'Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.'

How great now must the exercise needs be of Joshua and Caleb! They were of them that searched the land; but they were but two to ten. Yet they stood

boldly up in the zeal of the Lord, and having rent their clothes, through excessive sorrow, they spake unto all the company, saying, 'The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land, flowing indeed with milk and honey (that is, abounding with all good and necessary provisions); and if the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into this land, and give it us: only hinder not yourselves of it, by rebelling against the Lord; neither fear the people of the land, for they are but as bread to us (that is, we shall as surely overcome them, as we eat our food). For their defence is departed from them: but the Lord, who is our defence, is with us, therefore fear them not.'

So far were the people from being reclaimed by this pathetic speech, that all the congregation bade stone them with stones that spake it: which probably they had done, had not the glory of the Lord visibly appeared at that instant, in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel.

Meanwhile good Moses with Aaron lay prostrate on their faces, in the sight of the people, supplicating the Lord for mercy to them. Whereupon the Lord, expostulating with Moses, said, 'How long shall this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed amongst them? (Let me alone, Exod. xxxii. 10, and) I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they.'

Who, but a Moses, would have again refused such an offer? but he, postponing his own private advantage and honour, to the honour of God and the good of that people, applied himself with all earnestness to intercede with the Lord for them. Nor gave he over, till what with reasoning, what with humbly intreating pardon for them, he prevailed with the Lord to say, I have pardoned (as to the utter destroying and disinheriting them as I threatened) according to thy word. But yet, notwithstanding, inasmuch as these men who

have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I have wrought in Egypt, and in the wilderness, have tempted me now so often, and have not hearkened to my voice, assuredly they shall not see the land which I have promised unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it. Wherefore say unto the people, 'As I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do unto you. Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and of all that were numbered of you from twenty years old and upwards, because ye have murmured against me, none shall come into the land, save Caleb and Joshua. Yet will I make good my promise which I made to your fathers. For your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But as for you, who are gathered together against me, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness: there ye shall be consumed, and there ye shall die. And your children (though they shall possess the good land when ye are dead) shall wander in the wilderness forty years; and shall bear your whoredoms (the punishment due for your whoredoms) until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days (each day for a year) shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years: and ye shall know my breach of promise,' that is, what it is to charge me, as ye have done, with breach of promise to you: or what it is to break promise or covenant with me, as ye have done.

But though God, at the instant intreaty of Moses, did reverse his sentence of present death upon the whole congregation of murmurers, yet the ten false spies, the immediate authors of this rebellion, who had brought up an evil report upon the good land, were punished with death at that time; for they died by the plague before the Lord. But Caleb and Joshua, who were men of a right spirit, and fulfilled the will of the Lord, they were preserved alive, were commended of God, and had his promise, that they should enter into and possess the good land.

At this time it is supposed, and upon this occasion, Moses wrote that precatory Psalm, which in the book of Psalms is the ninetieth Psalm in number. Which, therefore, the reader may do well to turn to, and read in this place.

When Moses had told the children of Israel what the Lord had determined concerning them, it is said, they mourned greatly. But it doth not appear they were grown more subject, or were better disposed to obey the Lord. For whereas the Lord, not only in pursuance of his purpose concerning them, (to wear them out in the wilderness) but to prevent their being beaten by the Amalekites and Canaanites, who prepared to fight them, and he was not willing their enemies should glory in a victory over them, nor yet so far to own and stand by them, in their present temper, as to give them victory over their enemies, and therefore had given order, 'that the next day they should turn, and get them into the wilderness again, by the way of the Red Sea;' they got up betimes in the morning, and marching up unto the top of the mountain, cried, 'Lo, we be here ready, and we will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned,' that is, in not going up when we were bid. So now being sensible they had offended before in drawing back, when they should have gone on, they would now make amends by rushing on when they should have gone back. But this being undertaken in their own rebellious wills, as well as the other, was but adding sin to sin. God will be served in his own time and way.

Moses would fain have restrained them. He asked them, 'Why they would now again transgress the command of the Lord?' He told them, 'Their enterprize should not prosper; bid them not go up, that they might not be smitten before their enemies; told them, the Lord was not among them; that the Amalekites and Canaanites were got thither before them; and that, if they went on, they should fall by the sword; and in fine told them, because they were

turned from the Lord, the Lord would not be with them.'

All this, notwithstanding, they, being heady and presumptuous, would go up: and though the ark of the Lord, which was to go before the host in battle, went not, and Moses their captain did not stir out of the camp, yet up they went unto the hill-top. But they were met with: for the Amalekites, having possessed themselves of the place, came pouring down upon them; and the Canaanites, which dwelt in the hill, falling in with them, smote them, and discomfited them. And this they got by their unruliness.

Moses tells us, in Deut. i. 2, 'That there were eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea: and yet the people of Israel, through their waywardness and disobedience, spent the best part of two years in going that eleven days' journey. But more strange it is, that, being now returned back again from Kadesh-barnea, when they were near the confines of the promised land, they should be eight and thirty years more wandering about in that wilderness, before they could come to the borders of the promised land again. Yet that so long they were, Moses expressly says; 'The space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years,' Deut. ii. 14.

In this time many accidents befell them, and many remarkable occurrences are recorded of them. Of which the first is, of a man, who by a law made *ex post facto*, (as in the case of the blasphemer, mentioned before, Levit. xxiv) was stoned to death for breaking the sabbath, by gathering sticks on that day, Numb. xv.

Next follows that horrible rebellion and schism, begun by Korah, great grandson to Levi, who, as that which is called the Bishop's Bible, printed *anno* 1600, renders it, went apart, (that is, divided or separated himself from Moses and Aaron) and having seduced Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, of Reuben's family, and drawn in some others, to the number of two

hundred and fifty, princes of the assembly, men of renown, famous in the congregation, men of name and interest among the people, they rose up against Moses and Aaron, charging them that they took too much upon them; and pretending that all the congregation was holy, and that the Lord was among them, they upbraidingly asked Moses and Aaron, 'Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?' Numb. xvi.

When Moses saw and heard this, apprehensive of the danger and hurt, a conspiracy so headed might produce, he fell on his face (a phrase used to express divine adoration and application to God for help); and good reason there is to believe, that in that humble posture the Lord appeared to him, and both comforted and counselled him. For presently after we read he spake unto Korah and his company, letting them know, with great assurance, that on the morrow the Lord would decide the controversy, and would make appear who were his, and who was holy; and would cause him whom he had chosen to come near unto him.

Then mildly expostulating the matter with them, to let them see they took too much upon them, he said to Korah, and the other Levites that joined with him, 'Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi, seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near unto himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation, to minister unto them; and hath brought thee, Korah, near; and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee? And seek ye the priesthood also? for that is the cause for which thou, and all thy company, are gathered together against the Lord.' For whatever ye may pretend against Aaron, it is against the Lord, and against his appointment, that ye thus murmur and conspire: 'For alas! what is Aaron, that ye should murmur against him?'

Dathan and Abiram, it seems, stood off at a distance: for Moses sent to call them to come up to him. But they, grown heady and resolute, answered surlily, 'We will not come up.' And to retort his own expression upon himself, 'Is it a small thing, said they, that thou hast brought us up out of the land that floweth with milk and honey (so in contempt of Canaan, they cry up Egypt) to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?' Moreover, added they upbraidingly, thou hast not brought us (for all thy great boasts and fair promises) into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. But when we were come almost to it, and would have gone on to enter into it, and possess it, thou hast turned us back into this wilderness again, to repeat the fatigues, hardships, and miseries we have passed through already: 'And wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? Wilt thou think to blind the people with fair words only, and lead them on hood-winked? We will not come up.'

These reproachful and undeserved taunts made Moses very wroth: yet did he not return railing for railing. But addressing himself to the Lord, 'Respect not thou their offering, said he: for, though they reflect thus foully upon me, I have not taken so much as an ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.'

Then summoning Korah and all his company, the two hundred and fifty princes, to meet him and Aaron before the Lord on the morrow, he bid them 'Take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and Aaron should bring his censer also, and appear all before the Lord.' They had the confidence so to do, and bringing every man of them his censer, with fire in it, and incense laid thereon, they boldly set themselves in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron: and Korah, so apt is the multitude to be carried the wrong way, had gathered all the congregation to side with him against them.

But forthwith the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation, and the Lord soon took up the

matter; saying unto Moses and Aaron, 'Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.' But they, good men, falling prostrate before the Lord, said, 'O God, thou God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?' 'Speak then, said the Lord, unto the congregation, and bid them get them up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'

Moses thereupon rising up, and the elders of Israel (upon whom the Lord had put of his spirit, Numb. xi. 25) following him, he went unto Dathan and Abiram; and directing his speech to the congregation, said, 'Depart, I pray you from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed with them in their sins.'

The people thus warned, drew off from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side. But Dathan and Abiram came boldly out, and stood braying it in the door of their tents, with their wives, their families, and their little children.

Then Moses, continuing his speech to the people, said, 'Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.'

No sooner were the words out of his mouth, but the ground that was under them clave asunder; and the earth opening her mouth, swallowed them up, and their houses, or families, and all the men, the whole faction, that belonged to Korah, except his sons, chap. xxvi. ver. 11, and all their goods: they, and all that belonged to them, went down alive into the pit; and the earth closing upon them, they perished from among the congregation.

The rest of the people, that stood round about them looking on, amazed at the dismal sight, and affrighted with the outcries and shrieks of those that sunk into the gaping earth, fled away, for fear the earth should have swallowed them up also.

Meanwhile, 'There came out a fire from the Lord; and consumed the two hundred and fifty men,' that joining with Korah in this rebellion, had offered incense contrary to the law.

The censers on which they had offered, were ordered to be taken out of the burning, and preserved: but not in the form of censers. For, as on the one hand, they had been offered before the Lord, and thereby obtained, at least in the opinion of the people, a sort of consecration, the Lord, to keep up among that people the reputation and estimation of things devoted, would not have them put to base uses; so, on the other hand, to put a difference between his own institutions, and men's contrivances, especially the wicked contrivances of wicked men, he would not suffer them to be employed to the same use, nor be continued in the same form, which those men had put them to, and used them in. But he appointed that all those brasen censers should be wrought out into broad plates, or rather, perhaps, into one broad plate, and so be laid for a covering over the altar; giving expressly this reason for it, 'That it might be for a sign and a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, who was not of the seed of Aaron, should adventure to come near to offer incense before the Lord; lest he speed as Korah and his company had sped.'

This exemplary punishment, so evidently inflicted by a divine hand on these offenders, had been enough, one would have thought, to have kept the rest within the bounds of due obedience; but they, on the contrary, from hence took occasion to mutiny afresh.

For on the very morrow, all the congregation of the children of Israel not only murmured against Moses and Aaron; but bandying together against them,

charged them that they had killed the people of the Lord. And to what degree of violence they might have proceeded, is doubtful, had they not, looking toward the tabernacle of the congregation, seen the cloud covering it, and the glory of the Lord appearing there ; a sure token that the Lord had something to say to them.

Moses thereupon hasting with Aaron to the tabernacle of the congregation, to wait the pleasure of the Lord, the Lord said, ‘Get ye up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment.’ They thereupon fell down, as they used to do, to supplicate the Lord for the people ; but it would not now do : for the Lord, provoked by their so frequent rebellions, had already sent a plague among them. Wherefore Moses bid Aaron take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put incense thereon, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for, said he, ‘There is wrath gone out from the Lord: and the plague is begun.’

Aaron therefore, as Moses had directed him, ran into the midst of the congregation, with his censer and holy fire ; and finding the plague was indeed begun among the people, he put on incense, and made an atonement for them, and setting himself between the living and the dead, the Lord was pleased to stop the plague: but not until there had fallen by it fourteen thousand and seven hundred persons, besides them that died about the matter of Korah.

And now, since the office of the priesthood had proved such a bait to ambitious and aspiring minds, and the striving for it had cost many so dear, the Lord, to end all contests about it, and quash all false pretensions to it, resolved, by a convincing miracle, to confirm and establish it in the family wherein he had placed it.

In order whereunto he directed Moses to take of the prince or head of every tribe, a rod, or staff ; and to write upon each rod the name of the prince, or head

of that tribe to which that rod belonged : and on the rod of Levi's tribe to write Aaron's name ; and then to lay up all these twelve rods in the tabernacle of the congregation, before the ark of the testimony, where the Lord should meet with them. And to let them know that the Lord himself would determine the controversy, and put an end to all their murmurings, by causing the rod of that man to blossom, whom he should choose, Numb. xvii.

Moses, according to this direction, having received from the prince of each tribe a rod, with his name written upon it, laid up all the rods together before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness. And on the morrow, when Moses went in, and brought forth all the rods from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel, and they took every man his rod, and looked on it, ' Behold, the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, and brought forth blossoms, and bare ripe almonds.'

This must needs be a wonderful and astonishing thing in itself, that a dry stick should in one night's time shoot forth, bud, blossom, and bear ripe fruits : and a convincing token to them, that God had singled out Aaron to the priestly office, that of all the twelve sticks laid together, his stick only should produce this wonder.

The matter being thus incontestably determined and settled, the Lord bid Moses bring Aaron's rod back again, and lay it up before the ark of the testimony ; to be kept for a token against the rebels, and that it might quite take away their murmurings, and so prevent their death. But as great tumults are not soon settled, and high discontents are not quickly quieted, so this people could not give over complaining. ' Behold, said they to Moses, we die, we perish, we all perish.' Some fall by the sword, Numb. xiv ; ver. 45 ; some are swallowed up by the earth, Numb. xvi, ver. 32 ; some perish by fire, ver. 35 ; and some die of the plague, ver. 49. ' Shall we, said they, be consumed with dying?' Thus they reckoned up their calamities,

the punishments for their rebellions, but considered not that they themselves brought them on themselves by rebelling.

The eighteenth chapter of this book is spent in setting forth the charge of the priests and the Levites distinctly, with the distinct portions or provision of maintenance for each. Wherein (not to descend to all particulars) it is observable, that the priests, who were anointed to that office, and unto whom the charge of the tabernacle and sanctuary, with the vessels thereof, and all the hallowed things, were committed, had not the tithes given to them: for the tithes were given to the Levites, who were employed in the laborious part of the work about the tabernacle. But the priests had the offerings of the people, (the meat-offerings, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, heave-offerings, wave-offerings, and first fruits) and the tithes of the tithes which they were to receive from the Levites, who received the tithes from the people, Numb. xviii. And these tithes of tithes, which the priests were to receive from the Levites were to be offered, by the Levites, an heave-offering to the Lord; as the tithes themselves, which were given to the Levites, were offered an heave-offering to the Lord before. So that all the tithes, as well those from the people to the Levites, as those out of them, from the Levites to the priests, were, by this ceremony of heaving, rendered as completely a part of the ceremonial law, as the rest of the offerings under that dispensation were.

The nineteenth chapter treateth of legal pollutions and uncleannesses, and of the water of separation or purification, by which such were to be cleansed; directing how it should be both made and used: which water was a lively and significant type of the blood of Christ; who, being himself perfectly clean, by sprinkling cleanseth the unclean; not notionally, but really, and in very deed, Numb. xix.

By the interposition of these other matters, contained in these two chapters, we miss the account how the children of Israel came to Kadesh again, in the wil-

derness of Zin ; where we find them, in Numb. xx. Only Moses briefly reciting some of their frauds, in Deut. ii, tells us, that after they had been beaten by the Amalekites and Amorites, for which compare Deut. i. 44, with Numb. xiv. 45, ' they turned and took their journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea, as God had commanded, Numb. xiv. 25, and compassed Mount Seir many days' (which Tremellius and the Bishop's Bible, in their notes, account to be eight and thirty years): till at length the Lord said, ' Ye have compassed this mountain long enough : turn ye northwards.' Deut. ii, ver. 3.

Being come to Kadesh, while the people abode there, Miriam, who was sister to Aaron and Moses, and elder than either, died, and was buried there,* Numb. xx.

Here again the people, impatient of any inconvenience, brake out for want of water. And gathering themselves together against Moses and Aaron, they quarrelled with them, saying, ' Why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us into this evil place ; where are neither seed, nor figs, nor vines, nor pomegranates, nor so much as water to drink? Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord.'

Moses and Aaron, thus hard beset, betake themselves to the Lord for help. And the Lord commanded Moses to take the rod, and that he and his brother Aaron should gather the assembly together ; and then ' Speak ye, said the Lord, to the rock, in their sight, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock.'

Moses hereupon taking the rod from before the Lord, went, and with Aaron's assistance gathered the congregation together before the rock. But when he was come thither, deviating from his instructions,

* A. M. 2553.

though seemingly but a little, he committed his greatest miscarriage.

For first, whereas he was bid to speak to the rock before the people, he, instead of doing so, spake to the people before the rock. And in what he said to them he discovered impatience and heat of spirit, saying, ‘Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?’

Secondly he was not bid to strike the rock, but to speak to it. He, instead of speaking to it, smote the rock; and that twice: which shewed an angry disturbed mind.

If it should be asked, to what end he was commanded to take the rod, if it was not intended he should smite the rock with it? the answer is, perhaps it might be that the people, at sight of that rod, by which they had seen so many miracles wrought, if it was that rod by which Moses divided the Red Sea (as some think it was); or that by which they had been so lately reclaimed from a former rebellion, and which yet bore a miracle upon it, if it was that rod that budded and bore almonds (which others think it was); might see their error, repent, and confess that nothing was too hard for their God.

If it be alledged on Moses’ behalf, that when he was sent to the rock before, *Exod. xvii. 5, 6*, he was bid to take his rod in his hand, and to smite the rock, that the water might come forth; and that from thence he might gather he was now also to smite the rock with his rod; the answer is, as there he exactly followed his instructions, so he should have done here. He smote the rock then, because he was bidden: but he did not speak to it then, because he was not bidden. So he should now have spoken to it, because he was bidden; and not have smitten it, because he was not bidden. For God is an absolute sovereign, and expects an absolute and exact obedience to his absolute commands. Nor will he allow even Moses to vary his command, or mix his own conceptions with it unpunished. And therefore, though he would

not lose the honour of his miracle for his servant's fault, but caused the 'water to come abundantly out of the rock, for the congregation to drink, and the cattle also;' yet he denounced to Moses and Aaron (who was in transgression with him) their doom, in these words; 'Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the sight of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.'

While yet the Israelitish camp was at Kadesh, Moses sent an embassy to the king of Edom, whose borders they were now upon, to inform him of the travels and labour of the children of Israel (his brethren by the same father and mother, Isaac and Rebekah); and to intreat passage through his country; giving him assurance that they would not commit any act of hostility, nor trespass in the fields or vineyards, nor so much as drink of his water, without paying for it, but only travel on the king's highway. But the king of Edom utterly refused it, and drew out his forces to impede their passage, and defend his frontiers. Israel therefore, being forbidden by God to fight with them, Deut. ii. 5, turned another way; and marching from Kadesh, came to Mount Hor.

It was now the beginning of the fifth month, in the fortieth year of their travels from Egypt, Numb xxxiii. 38; and the time drew near for their entering the good land, into which the Lord had told Aaron he should not enter, because of his transgression at Meribah (so was the place called where Moses smote the rock, Numb. xx. 13). Wherefore being now come to Mount Hor, the Lord gave Aaron notice of his approaching death; and commanded Moses to take Aaron and Eleazar his son, who was to succeed him in the office of high-priest, and bringing them up to Mount Hor, there to strip Aaron of his priestly garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son. Which when Moses had done, in the sight of all the congregation, Aaron died there, in the top of Mount Hor, being an hundred twenty and three years old, Numb.

xxxiii. 39. And when the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for him thirty days.*

Israel being now come to the border of Canaan, Arad, a king of the Canaanites, who dwelt in the south, hearing which way they came, went out and fought them, and took some of them prisoners. Israel thereupon made a vow to the Lord, saying, 'If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.' And the Lord delivering up the Canaanites to them, they did utterly destroy both them and their cities; and called the name of the place where the battle was fought Hormah, which signifies utter destruction. This seems to be the same place to which the Amalekites had chased and beaten Israel about eight and thirty years before, Numb. xiv. 45.

This victory obtained, the camp was obliged to dislodge from Mount Hor, and take their march by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom; through which they had been denied passage, Numb. xx. 18, 21; and forbidden to force their way, Deut. ii, ver. 5; and because the way was long, the passages uneasy, and the country barren, the people being straitened in their minds, and under great discouragements, let up the murmuring spirit again, and spake against God directly, as well as against Moses: 'Wherefore, said they, have ye brought us up out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness? (This was their constant complaint.) For here is neither meet nor drink to be had, cried they; and our soul loatheth (our stomachs turn against) this contemptible bread:' meaning the manna which God had given them ready prepared for their mouths.

To punish therefore this bold impiety, the Lord sent fiery serpents amongst them, which bit them, so that many of the people died thereupon. This made the rest humble themselves, saying to Moses, 'We have sinned: for we have spoken against the Lord, and

against thee. Pray now the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us,' Numb. xxi.

Here I cannot but observe how like this people were to Pharaoh, rebelling and relenting; rebelling again, and relenting again, according as judgments were laid on them, as if they had learned of him.

However Moses, at their request, prayed unto the Lord for them. But the Lord did not immediately take away the serpents; but leaving them to be a scourge to the people, to make them more sensible of their transgression, provided a remedy to prevent their death, and heal their hurts. For he ordered Moses to make a serpent of a fiery colour, and set it up for a sign, or ensign, that the people who were bitten by the fiery serpents, might, by looking up to this serpent, be recovered. Moses thereupon made the form of a serpent in brass, and set it up as a banner; and it came to pass, that when afterwards a serpent bit any man, if he looked upon that brasen serpent he lived, that is, he was healed.

This brasen serpent, a significant type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being lifted up as an ensign for the nations, Isai. xi. 12, gives life and salvation to all them that in true faith look up unto him, remained among the Jews above seven hundred years, to the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah; who in an holy zeal, pursuant to God's command, Exod. xxii. 24, Deut. vii. 5; removing the high places, breaking the images, and cutting down the groves, brake also in pieces this brasen serpent among the rest (though Moses, by the express command of God, had made it, and it was a piece of so great antiquity) because he found the people had for a long time committed idolatry, in burning incense to it. And to put contempt upon it, he called it Nehushtan, a piece of brass only, 2 Kings xviii, ver. 4.

After that the children of Israel, by several removes in their journies, were come to the top of Pisgah, the hill which looketh towards Jeshimon, the wilderness, they sent ambassadors to Sihon, king of

the Amorites, to desire passage through this land, promising not to break into the fields or vineyards, nor to drink of the waters, a scarce commodity in those hot countries : but only to go along by the king's highway, till they should be past his borders.

The Amorite king, not thinking it safe to receive such a numerous host of unsettled people into the heart of his kingdom, gave them an absolute denial of passage. And holding it better policy to assault than be assaulted, gathered all his people together, and marching out into the wilderness against Israel, gave them battle at Jahaz ; which signifies strife.

But Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and gave the Amorites such a total defeat, that they possessed their land from one end to the other ; and taking their cities and villages, dwelt in Moab. And because Israel was not suffered to fight against Moab, Deut. ii. 9, this Amorite king had before fought with the king of Moab, and taken Heshbon, and the other places from him, which now by this conquest fell to Israel.

Israel being thus possessed of the land of the Amorites, and dwelling in it, Moses sent some to spy out Jazzar, a city where dwelt another party of the Amorites ; and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.

Then turning, they went by the way of Bashan, where reigned king Og, another Amorite king, and the last of the race of the giants there ; whose stature may be guessed at by the size of his bed, which, being made of iron for strength, was nine cubits in length, and four cubits in breadth, after the cubits of a man ; which being the common cubit, containing half a yard, or one foot and a half English measure, if reduced to yards or feet, will yield four yards and a half, or thirteen feet and a half, for the length, and two yards, or six feet, for the breadth of the bed.

This monster of a king came forth against Israel, he and all his people, to the battle of Edrei ; a fit place for him to exercise his arms, and shew his prowess in :

for it signifies, the heap of strength or might. But lest the Israelites should be dismayed at the sight of such a champion, the Lord prepared them, by bidding Moses fear him not, saying, 'For I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst to Sihon king of the Amorites.'

Israel, thus encouraged, joined the battle, and slew king Og, and his sons, and all his people, till there was none left alive. They took also all his cities, three-score in number, all fenced with high walls, gates and bars; besides unwall'd towns a great many; destroying utterly the inhabitants, both men, women and children; but keeping all the cattle and the spoil of the cities for a prey to themselves, as they had done before in the case of Sihon, the other Amorite king, Deut. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7; and as they were commanded, Deut. xx, where the feacial laws, or laws of war and heraldry, are set down. By which laws they were required, upon their approach to any city that was at a distance from them, to offer peace in the first place; which if the inhabitants accepted, and surrendered to them, they should only make them tributaries. But if they refused peace, and put them to besiege and storm the place, they should, when they had taken it, put all the men to the sword: but might keep the women and little ones, with the cattle and other spoil for themselves.

Thus for the cities of the remoter countries: but the cities of those neighbouring people, which the Lord had given them for an inheritance, as particularly and by name, the Hittites and Amorites, the Canaanites and Perizzites, the Hivites and Jebusites, they were to save none alive; but utterly to destroy all, both men, women and children.

Now as this execution was a type of the spiritual warfare against the soul's enemies, of which none old or young, great or small, are to be spared, or saved alive; so the political reason of this martial severity is given in the next verse, 'That they teach you not

to do after their abominations, which they have done unto their gods : so should ye sin against the Lord your God.' So that it seems to have been a kind of *se defendendo*, a destroying them, lest they should tempt and draw you to do that which would provoke the Lord to destroy you.

Flushed with these victories, the children of Israel now set forward, and pitched on the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan by Jericho.

This put Balak king of Moab into a great fright : for he had seen (that is, he had understood) how Israel had dealt with his neighbours the Amorites. And the people, as well as their king, seeing so great a host lying before them in their neighbouring plains, were sore afraid, and even distressed in their minds, because of the children of Israel. Whereas had they known the protection they were under, they needed not have been afraid : for they, if they would have been quiet, were particularly exempted from Israel's sword, Deut. ii. 9.

But Balak not knowing that, but knowing himself too weak in forces to cope with Israel in battle, called the elders of Midian to council, who either lived amongst the Moabites, or were their near neighbours and allies. And having proposed to them the common danger, and advised together about it, the result of their consultation was, that king Balak should send messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, who lived at Pethor, a city in Mesopotamia, Deut. xxiii. 4, to invite and hire him to come and curse the people of Israel.

This Balaam was in so great reputation among those idolatrous people, that they really thought (or to gratify his ambition and draw him the more readily to come, pretended that they thought) every one blessed, whom he blessed ; and cursed, whom he cursed.

Having deputed therefore a select number of the elders or princes of each people, Moabites and Midianites, joined in an embassy together, the king sent them to him, with the rewards of divination in their

hands. For they well knew he was covetous, and extremely greedy of gain. And indeed that was the bait that caught him: 'He loved the wages of unrighteousness,' 2 Pet. ii. 15. Yet when they came to him, and had delivered their message from the king, he pretended so much regard to the Lord, that he would not give them an answer, till he had consulted him.

To try how Balaam would represent the matter, God asked him, 'What men those were that were with him. They are some, said he, whom the king of Moab hath sent, to let me know that there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth; and to desire me to come to him, and curse them, in hopes that then he may be able to overcome them, and drive them away. But, said God to him, thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse that people: for they are blessed,' Numb. xxii.

Balaam, well knowing how unsafe it would be for him to go against the command of the Lord, got up in the morning, and dismissed the princes of Balak, saying, 'Get ye into your own land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.' This shews he asked leave, and would have gone. The princes returning to their king, misreport to him Balaam's answer: for instead of telling him that God refused to let him come, they tell him, that Balaam refused to come.

Balak, from this answer, might probably think, that either the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition; or the value of rewards, his covetousness. For he forthwith sent to him again more princes, and those too more honourable than the former; and with proposals of higher terms. 'Let nothing, I pray thee, (said he by his ambassadors) hinder thee from coming to me: for I will promote thee unto very great honour; and I will do whatsoever thou sayest to me (or I will give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask). Come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.'

Balaam's answer shews the temper of his mind, and what he would have been at. He did not say, I dislike the work; and therefore have no mind to go with you. But he tells them, 'If Balak will give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God.' The word of the Lord to him was expressly, 'Thou shalt not go; thou shalt not curse the people.' God had laid a restraint upon him that he could not go; though he fain would.

Yet so greedy was he of the promised reward, that he would try if he could prevail with God to break his word, to alter his command, and let him go. Therefore he fawns upon the messengers, and prays them to tarry with him that night also, that he might know what the Lord would say unto him more. This was tempting God: who therefore in displeasure left him to follow his own will. So to do, hath not been unusual with God, when provoked by disobedience.

Thus he dealt with the Israelites afterwards, when they, rejecting his government, would needs have a king, that they might be like other nations, 1 Sam. viii. 7. He answered their desire, and gave them a king, but he did it in his anger, Hosea xiii. 11. And at other times, when they would not hearken to him, he gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and let them walk in their own counsels, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12.

Thus he dealt with Balaam here. He had told him his mind plainly and fully: Balaam would not take it for an answer, but would try him again. Provoked thereby, God tells him, 'If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them.' This I take to be not a command, but a permission. As if he had said, Seeing thou art so eager to go, though thou knowest it is against my mind, take thy own course: go, if thou wilt. But yet thou shalt not obtain thine end: 'For the word which I spake unto thee, that shalt thou do,' though against thine own will.

That this suffering him to go was in displeasure to him, appears from God's anger being kindled against him for going, and sending his angel to stop him on the

way : for upon this concession, up got Balaam in the morning, and away he went with the princes of Moab, having his two servants to wait on him ; probably, both for the greater state, and to bring back the treasure he hoped to receive. But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the way, for an adversary against him. Whence, besides the plain proof that Balaam went but by permission, and that the permission was granted in displeasure to him, this useful observation arises, viz. ' That whosoever goeth to curse whom God hath blessed, shall be sure to have God an adversary in his way.'

' The angel of the Lord stood in the way with his drawn sword in his hand ;' yet so blind was Balaam, that he saw him not, though the silly ass could both see and shun him : for the ass turning out of the way, carried him into a field ; for which he smote her, to bring her into the way again ; and when the angel, removing forward, stood in a path that had a wall on each side, the ass, to shun the angel, thrusting close up to the wall, crushed Balaam's foot against it : for which he smote her again. But when the angel, going further, stood in a narrow place, where there was no way to turn, either to the one hand or the other, the ass, rather than expose her master to the angel's sword, fell down under him : and then he smote her with his staff. So eager is man, blinded with the desire of riches, honours, pleasures, &c. to rush on to his own destruction.

Now the Lord, to rebuke the iniquity, and forbid the madness of the prophet, opened the mouth of the ass, enabling her to speak with man's voice. Which strange and unnatural thing, enough of itself, one would think, to have amazed another man (and him too, if he had not been intent and wholly taken up in contriving how to make earnings of his journey) he took no notice of ; but held a dialogue with the ass, till the Lord was pleased to rouse him, by opening his eyes, and letting him see the angel standing in his way,

with his sword drawn in his hand ; at the sight of which he bowed himself down, and fell flat on his face : for instant danger will make the most wicked men bow.

Then, upon the angel's expostulating with him, telling him his way (that is, his purpose, or the undertaking he went upon) was perverse before the Lord (for he had a mind to do that which the Lord had forbidden him) ; that therefore he was come out to withstand him, and had slain him, but for his ass, which he had so ungratefully beaten : Balaam confessed he had sinned, and faintly offered to go back, if his journey displeased the Lord. But it appears that this was but a copy of his countenance, by his laying it upon an *if*. 'If my going displease thee, I will get me back again.' He needed not have made an *if* of it : for he knew well enough, that from the first it displeased the Lord, and that at the first he had positively forbidden him to go.

But now that he was gone so far, the Lord would not send him back ; but resolving to turn his evil purpose to a good end for his people, by making him, who was hired to curse, pronounce a blessing on them, having given him this cautionary correction by the way, he suffered him to go on, but with this charge, 'Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, shalt thou speak.' And so on went Balaam with the princes of Balak.

Now when Balak understood that Balaam was coming, that he might engage him the more by personal respects, he went out in person to meet him, to the utmost coast of his country. And when he had, after their first salutation, gently blamed him for not coming to him at the first sending, who was so able to promote him to honour ; and Balaam, in excuse, had let him know what a restraint the Lord had laid upon him : he treated him, with the princes, at a solemn feast that day ; and the next day brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people, in order to curse them.

How oft, since that, have the successors of Balaam, out of love to the wages of unrighteousness, endeavoured to curse the Israel of God, from the high places of Ball!

Balaam thus got into the high places of Ball, directs Balak to cause seven altars to be built for him there; and seven oxen, with seven rams, to be prepared. Which when Balak had done, they together offered a bullock and a ram upon each altar. Then leaving Balak to stand by his burnt offering, Balaam went aside, to see if the Lord would meet him; and the Lord did meet him, and put a word in his mouth, charging him what he should say.

Returning therefore to Balak, whom he found standing by his burnt sacrifice, and all the princes of Moab with him, Balaam took up his parable, and said, 'Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram (or Syria) out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. But how shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone (they shall be separated to God, and distinguished from all other people, in religion, laws and course of life; a true figure of the spiritual Israel): they shall not be reckoned among the nations,' Numb. xxiii.

Then to set forth the prosperity and increase of Israel, he brake forth into admiration thus; 'Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel!'

And to shew how happy and blessed they should be, 'Let me die, said he, the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his.'

How great a disappointment this was to Balak, may be gathered from his answer to Balaam. 'What hast thou done unto me? said he: I took thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.'

Balaam excused himself by the necessity he was under, to speak that which the Lord had put in his mouth. As much as to say, Indeed, I could not help it; 'I would have cursed them if I could:' but I could not; I had not power to speak what I would, for my mouth was filled and directed by the Lord.

And indeed, if we consider what Moses told the Israelites, Deut. xxiii. 5, 'Nevertheless, the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but turned the curse into a blessing to thee:' we may well conclude, that Balaam did earnestly labour with God, by persuasion or intreaty, to have had liberty to have cursed Israel.

Balak hoping that what he had missed of in one place, he might find in another, brought Balaam into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, to see if he could curse them from thence. And Balaam, as willing to please him, had seven altars built there, and a bullock with a ram offered on each. Then going aside, as before, to meet the Lord, he had a word put in his mouth again by the Lord, with a charge what he should say.

By this time Balak began to understand that the Lord was to be consulted in the case. Wherefore, when Balaam returned to him, as he, with the princes of Moab, big with expectation, stood by his burnt offering, he asked him, 'What hath the Lord spoken?' Whereupon Balaam, to bespeak the greater attention and regard to what he should say, began thus:

'Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor. God (who hath already blessed Israel, and forbidden me to curse them) is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: for he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is in him. (So Hierom, Arias Mon-

tanus, and Tremellius and Junius turn it.) God brought them out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn. (So that it is in vain to attempt any thing by force against them; and to as little purpose to use facinations or enchantments: for) Surely no enchantment can prevail against Jacob; nor any divination against Israel. So that, according to this time, it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'What hath God wrought?' (who hath both set a defence about Israel, that neither force nor fraud can reach them; and hath turned the intended curse into a blessing.) Then prophesying of the future strength, victories, and success of Israel, he added, 'The people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.'

This to Balak was worse than if Balaam had said nothing: therefore he bid him, 'Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.' But he held not long in that mind: for though he had rather Israel should escape a cursing, than receive a blessing; yet his eagerness to have them cursed, made him willing to try once more.

'Come, I pray thee, said he to Balaam, and I will bring thee unto another place: peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.' That said, away he leads him to the top of Peor, a hill that looked towards Jeshimon, or the wilderness. And though Balaam had but just before declared, that God was not a man to lie or repent, yet desirous of getting the reward, he fell in with wicked Balak, to tempt God anew; causing seven altars to be built there also, and offered a bullock with a ram on each. And God, who brings good out of evil, suffered him thus to run on, that he might thence take occasion to multiply his blessings upon his Israel.

But Balaam, having tried in vain all his magical tricks, and now seeing that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, went not, as at other times under pretence of meeting the Lord, to seek for enchantments, but

set his face directly towards the wilderness, in which Israel lay encamped. And when, lifting up his eyes, he saw them abiding in that excellent order, wherein they were disposed, chap. ii, according to their tribes, the spirit of God came upon him.

Before, while he sought to work by enchantments, he had only a word put in his mouth ; but now having laid aside his enchantments, the spirit of God came upon him. Whereby his eyes, which before were shut, being now somewhat opened, he cried out, ‘ How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob ; and thy tabernacles, O Israel,’ Numb. xxiv.

Then by significant metaphors, setting forth the extent, fertility, sweet savour, and stately strength of Israel, he says, ‘ As the vallies are they spread forth ; as gardens by the river’s side ; as the trees of lign-aloes, which the Lord hath planted ; and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters. His king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.’ For Agag was a common appellative for the kings of Amalek, as Pharaoh was for the kings of Egypt ; and Amalek being then the most flourishing kingdom, was pitched on for the comparison.

Then going on he adds, ‘ God brought him (Israel) out of Egypt ; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn : he shall eat up the nations, his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched ; he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion. Who shall stir him up ? Blessed is he that blesseth thee (heartily, and with a good will ; not as Balaam did against his will) : and cursed is he that curseth thee.’

These words kindled Balak’s anger against Balaam to that height, that smiting his hands together (a token of great displeasure) and upbraiding Balaam with having deceived him, in blessing those whom he was sent for to curse, he bid him haste and be gone : for I thought, said he, to have promoted thee to great hon-

our, if thou had answered my design in cursing Israel ; but the Lord hath kept thee back from honour.

Balaam had recourse to his old excuse, that he could not help it, being over-ruled by the Lord, and made to speak what he put into his mouth. But that he might not go away without gratifying Balak in some sort, and perhaps that he might entitle himself to some gratuity from him, he offered to advertise or inform him, now at parting, what this people should do to his people in the latter days, or time to come. Which having done, from ver. 15, to the end of this chapter, he then also, as may well be supposed, taught Balak how to betray Israel, and draw them into fornication and idolatry ; which soon after followed, and which Moses, in chap. xxxi. 16, doth plainly refer to the counsel of Balaam.

For the very next account we have of Israel is, that they abode in Shittim ; which signifies, turning aside ; and they turned aside indeed, so far as to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab or Midian.

Now these daughters of Moab and Midian, or both (for as they lived promiscuously, so it is evident from chap. xxxi. 15, there were of both people concerned in this treacherous plot against Israel) allured the people to partake with them of the sacrifices of their gods ; and, ‘ the people did eat and bowed down to their gods.’ So that Israel joined herself to Baal-peor (supposed to be the beastly Priapus, or lecherous god) for which the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, Numb. xxv.

Whence we may observe, that to partake of the sacrifices or peculiar performances, of those who are not God’s peculiar people, though they be such as sprang from a righteous stock, as Moab from Lot, and Midian from Abraham ; and to bow down, in such performances, with them, is to join the object of their adoration, whatever it be.

How great this offence was, in the sight of God, may be seen in the punishment inflicted for it. For hereupon the Lord commanded Moses to take all the

heads of the people (understand it of those heads only, and of that part of the people that had joined themselves to Baal-peor) and hang them up before the Lord, against the sun (that is, openly, in the sight of all) that the fierce anger of the Lord might be turned away from Israel.

Moses therefore gave charge unto the judges of Israel, those whom by the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, with God's approbation, he had set over the people, *Exod. xviii*, to see execution done, every one on the men under his charge that were joined unto Baal-peor. Whereupon a thousand of the princes, or heads of the people, are supposed to have been thus executed. But the matter stopped not there.

For a bold young man, whose name was Zimri (probably a jolly blade, for his name signifies singing) the son of Salu (which signifies exultation, or treading underfoot) a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites, took Cozbi (which signifies a liar) the daughter of Zur (which signifies strong) who also was a prince in the chief house of Midian; and daringly brought her unto his brethren, in contempt of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who, because of the fresh execution done upon their princes, stood weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and leading her openly into his tent, there lay with her!

Which daring act, and open violation of God's law, when Phineas, Aaron's grandson, saw, and that none of the judges took cognizance of it; he rose up from amongst the congregation, and filled with a divine zeal, taking a javelin in his hand, he followed them into the tent: and taking them in the very act of whoredome, thrust them both through.

This zealous act of Phineas, put a stop to the plague, which for this audacious act of Zimri's, and the other whoredoms of his comrades, the Lord had sent among the people. Yet there died on this occasion no less than four and twenty thousand. In which number, it is probable, Moses does include the thousand princes

that were hanged for it. Which computation reconciles this place to that of the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 8; where he mentions but three and twenty thousand.

So acceptable was this service of Phineas to the Lord, that the Lord not only commended him highly for it, saying, 'Phineas hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel (while he was zealous for my sake among them) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy;' but also rewarded him with his covenant of peace, in the enjoyment of the priesthood, saying, 'Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him; even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.'

This rebellion thus suppressed, the offenders punished, and Phineas for his godly zeal rewarded; the next thing was to take vengeance on the Midianites, under which name I take the Moabites also in this case to be comprehended, for their having betrayed Israel into this snare and mischief. In order whereunto, the Lord gave Moses order to vex the Midianites, and smite them: 'For they, said he, vex you with their wiles wherewith they have beguiled you, in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi.' The matter of Peor was their idolatry, in eating of their sacrifices and bowing down to their gods; the matter of Cozbi was their whoredoms, chap. xxv. 1; but this order being general and preparatory, was repeated more fully and particularly afterwards, chap. xxxi.

In the mean time, the Lord commanded that now, after this plague, the people, that is, the males, should be numbered again: wherein the same method is appointed to be taken, that was used in the former numbering, chap. i. For the other tribes, being numbered with respect to war, and to their possessing the land, were numbered from twenty years old. But the Levites being exempted from war, and excluded from possessions, were numbered from a month old, Numb. xxvi.

The account thereof is set down at large in chap. xxvi. And thereby it appears, that of all that were first numbered by Moses and Aaron, in the wilderness of Sinai, chap. i, there was not then a man left alive, besides Moses, excepting only Caleb and Joshua. So that in less than forty years, no less than six hundred three thousand five hundred and fifty grown men, for so many were numbered, chap. i, besides the tribe of Levi, died in the wilderness, three only excepted.... And yet now, at the second numbering, there was found six hundred one thousand seven hundred and thirty men, of twenty years old and upwards; besides the Levites.

After an enumeration of divers laws and ordinances made and promulgated; some more general, as relating to the daily burnt offerings, and other offerings upon particular festivals; some more particular, as private vows, and the settling of inheritances in the female line, in defect of the issue male; Midian came again in remembrance before the Lord, and he renewed the command he had given before to Moses, saying, 'Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: and afterwards thou shalt be gathered to thy people.' Numb. xxvii, xxviii, xxix, xxxi.

Moses thereupon gave order that a detachment of twelve thousand select men, one thousand out of every tribe, should go against the Midianites, to avenge the Lord upon Midian: and zealous Phineas went along with them, having the charge of the holy instruments.

This was a very little host to invade a great and potent people: but the Lord, who sent them, went with them; to whom to prevail by many or by few, is alike. They were sent to avenge the Lord, and Israel, on the Midianites; and they did it, with a vengeance: for they slew five kings, or dukes, Josh xiii. 21, and all the men; and among the rest the evil prophet Balaam; who being on his way homewards, but not, it seems, gotten out of their reach, was found among the Midianites, and fell by Israel's sword. They burned also all their cities and goodly castles;

bid her be sure to tie a scarlet thread or line in the window, through which she had let them down, and bring her father, mother, brethren, and all her father's household home unto her, and let them be careful to keep within doors, when the Israelitish army should enter the town. For if the line were not in the window, for them to know the house by, or if any of the family should be found abroad in the street, his blood, if he were slain, should be upon his own head; and they would be guiltless. But if any should be slain that was in the house with her, his blood should be on their head: always provided, that she did not discover their enterprize. When they had spoken, she said, Amen to the terms; and sent them away: and they escaping into the mountain, tarried there three days, till the pursuers, who had sought them throughout all the way, not finding them, were returned. And then these two men also, descending from the mountain, passed over Jordan; and returning to Joshua, told him what had befallen them, and how narrowly they had escaped. Adding withall, 'Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land: for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.'

This so good and cheering news made Joshua hasten. Wherefore having put the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, in mind of the compact made between Moses and them, that they, leaving their wives, children and cattle on this side Jordan, should go over armed (to wit, the prime of their men of war) before their brethren, to help to subdue their enemies, and place them in their possessions; which they acknowledging themselves bound to do, declared their readiness to go; with a resolution to be subject to him, their general, as they had been to Moses; promising in all things to obey his commands, under the penalty of martial discipline; and therefore encouraged him to be strong and courageous. As soon as the three days were past, which he had allowed the army to prepare their necessaries, the officers going

through the host, commanded the people, that when they should see the ark of the covenant of the Lord their God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then they should remove from their place and go after it; that they might know the way by which they were to go, because they had never passed that way before. And that a due and decent order might be observed in their march, direction was given that they should leave a space of about two thousand cubits, commonly taken for a mile, between the ark and them, Josh. iii.

Early therefore in the morning, on the ninth day of the first month, Joshua got up, and having exhorted the people to sanctify themselves, because the Lord would next day do wonders amongst them; he bid the priests 'take up the ark of the covenant, and pass along with it before the people:' which they doing, he and all the children of Israel removing from Shittim, came to Jordan, and lodged there before they passed over.*

Being ready next morning to pass over Jordan, and the Lord having told Joshua that that day he would begin to magnify him in the sight of all Israel, so that they should know, that as he had been with Moses, so he would be with him; and having also directed him to bid the priests, who were to bear the ark of the covenant, to stand still, when they were come to the brink of the water; Joshua thereupon calling the children of Israel to hear the words of the Lord their God, said, 'Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan. Now therefore take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest

* A. M. 2553.

in the waters of Jordan, that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above ; and they shall stand upon a heap.' And exactly so it came to pass ; so that the priests that bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan. And this was that wonder, wherewith the Lord had promised Joshua that he would magnify him : as he had before magnified Moses, by dividing the waters at the Red Sea.

Joshua having before, by the Lord's command, selected out twelve men, one out of each tribe ; so soon as all the people were clean passed over Jordan, he called these twelve men to him, and bid them pass on before the ark of the Lord into the midst of Jordan, and there, in the place where the priests' feet stood firm on dry ground, take up twelve stones, every man of them a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carry them to the place where they should lodge that night ; which accordingly they did. Besides which, Joshua set up twelve other stones in Jordan, as a memorial of this great miracle, in the place where the feet of the priests stood, that did bear the ark of the covenant.

Now when all the people were passed over Jordan, about forty thousand of the children of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, ready armed for war, leading the van, the Lord bid Joshua command the priests that bare the ark of the testimony, to come up with the ark out of Jordan. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until all the people were passed over, and every thing was finished that the Lord had commanded, relating to their passage. And as soon as the priests, that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, were come up out of the midst of Jordan, the waters of Jordan returned to their place, and flowed over all the banks, as they were wont to do before : for Jordan used to overflow its banks in the time of harvest.

Israel having thus passed over Jordan, on the tenth day of the fifth month, encamped in a place called

afterwards Gilgal, which was in the east border of Jericho; and there did Joshua pitch those twelve stones, which the twelve men had brought out of Jordan, to stand there as a monument to posterity, that when the offspring of Israel, in times to come, should ask their parents the reason thereof, they might thence take occasion to inform them, that the Lord their God had dried up the waters of Jordan, and caused his Israel to come over on dry land, as he formerly dried up the Red Sea for their passage out of Egypt; and that all the people of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is mighty.

So great a miracle as this was, to cause a deep and rapid stream to divide itself, and the waters, forgetting their natural fluidity, to stand on heaps, while more than a million of people, perhaps two millions (for there were more than six hundred thousand fighting men, besides the tribe of Levi, and the women and children of all the tribes) passed through the channel dry foot, with all their cattle and carriages; and this so publicly wrought, in the sight of the nations, might well strike the inhabitants of the land with astonishment and terror, and so it did. For it is said, 'When all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until they were passed over, their heart melted; neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.'

Herein the wisdom of God was greatly manifest, in striking the nations with such a fear, that they should not dare to make head against Israel upon their passing over Jordan, Josh. iv. For the Lord had now a work to do upon his people, which would render them for a while unable not only to assail their enemies, but even to defend themselves. For during their travel in the wilderness, circumcision had been omitted; whether through a neglect of the ordinance; or that being (or expecting to be) always upon the march, they thought it unsafe to expose them to the hardship

of it ; and all they who were men when they came out of Egypt, and had been circumcised there, being dead, (Joshua and Caleb only excepted) most of the present generation, being such as had been born within the forty years of their wilderness travel, had not been circumcised hitherto.

The Lord therefore, now that they were passed over Jordan, and were ready to take possession of the promised land, commanded Joshua to make him sharp knives, and circumcise the sons of Israel again (that is, all those of them that had not been circumcised already in their infancy in Egypt) ; which Joshua caused to be done. And when it was done, the Lord said unto Joshua, ‘ This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you,’ Josh. v. And from hence the name of the place where this was done, was called Gilgal, which signifies rolling. So that the using of that name before, both in Josh. iv. 19, and in Deut. xi. 30, was by anticipation.

In this place they encamped, and staid till they were whole of the wounds their circumcision had made. And here they kept the passover, on the fourteenth day of the first month, at even, in the plains of Jericho.

And now they began to enjoy the good of the land : for on the next day after the passover, they eat of the old corn of the land ; and on the morrow, the manna ceased ; so that they eat thenceforward of the fruit of the land of Canaan.

Now was Jericho straitly shut up for fear of the children of Israel ; none were suffered to go out or in : so that it seems they resolved to maintain the place, and bear a siege. Joshua therefore himself drew near to Jericho ; probably to observe where he might best plant his batteries, and make his approaches against the city.

And as he stood there looking up, he saw a man standing over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand, Josh. vi.

Joshua being a man of high courage, went up to him ; and boldly asked him, ‘ Art thou for us, or for

our adversaries?' He answered, 'Nay (not for your adversaries): but as captain of the host of the Lord am I come.' At which word Joshua fell on his face, and worshipped, saying, 'What saith my Lord unto his servant?'

By this act of adoration, and the title of Lord, performed and given by Joshua, and accepted by the other, it is evident that this captain of the Lord's host was Christ, the Son of God, who was pleased in this manner to appear to Joshua, both to encourage and direct him. Wherefore having first bid Joshua, as Moses was bid at the burning bush, *Exod. iii. 5*: 'to loose his shoe from off his foot; because the place whereon he stood was holy,' and Joshua having obeyed, the Lord said to him, 'See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, with the mighty men of valour;' and then instructed him in what manner he should beleaguer the city, and how he should take it, *chap. vi. 2, &c.*

Pursuant to which direction, Joshua, drawing out the men of war, set them foremost; and next to them seven priests, blowing seven trumpets, made of rams' horns: then followed the ark of the covenant of the Lord; and after that the re-re-ward of the army.

In this order he commanded them to march round the city, once every day, for six days together, the seven priests sounding their trumpets as they went, and to return to the camp at night. But he gave them a strict charge, that none of the people should shout, nor speak a word, as they marched, until he should give them the signal to shout: and then they should shout stoutly.

Having compassed the city thus six days one after another, on the seventh day setting out betimes, about the dawning of the day, they compassed the city seven times that day, whence we may conclude the place could not be of any great bigness; and at the seventh time when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, 'Shout! for the Lord hath given you the city.' With that the people gave a

great shout ; and thereupon the wall of the city fell down flat : so that the army marched directly up into the city, and took it ; putting all to the sword, both man and beast, old and young.*

Only Rahab, and those in her house, were saved.... For Joshua had given charge before hand to the two spies, which she had formerly hid, to take care, and make it their business, when the town should be taken, to go to her house, and bring her out, and all that she had, in discharge of their oath. Which accordingly they did, and left her with all her kindred and substance, safe without the camp of Israel ; for being aliens, or heathens, they were not permitted to come within the camp, until they were proselyted, or at least legally purified.

Then setting the city on fire, they destroyed all that was therein ; except the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and of iron ; such things as would bear the fire ; which were put into the treasury of the house of the Lord. And Joshua gave forth a prophetic imprecation upon him that should undertake to build that city again, viz. That he should ‘ lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son ;’ that is, it should be the ruin of his family : which afterwards befell to Hiel, the Bethelite, who in the days of Ahab king of Israel, above five hundred years after, began it with the loss of his eldest son Abiram, and finished it with the loss of Segub his youngest son, 1 Kings xvi. 34.

Joshua had told the people before they had taken the city, that it, and all that was therein, should be devoted to destruction, as an accursed thing, except the silver, gold, brass, and iron ; which should be consecrated to the Lord : and therefore he warned them, that they should by no means meddle with the accursed thing, lest they should make themselves accursed, by taking any thing of it, and so trouble the camp of Israel, by bringing a curse upon it.

But notwithstanding this strict charge, one of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Achan, which signi-

fies troubling, took of the accursed thing, as well of that which was devoted to destruction, as of that which was consecrated to the Lord. And this brought so great a trouble and curse upon Israel, that when Joshua sent some to view Ai, a little city beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and finding it was not populous, nor well defended, ordered about three thousand men to go up and take it; they were repulsed, and beaten, and fled before the men of Ai, with the loss of some of the party, and the discouragement of the whole army, Josh. vii.

This disaster wonderfully afflicted Joshua: so that rending his clothes, and falling to the earth upon his face, before the ark of the Lord, he lay there until the evening; both he, and the elders of Israel, with dust upon their heads, tokens of extreme sorrow and humiliation; see 1 Sam. iv. 12, and Nehem. ix. 1.... And being wholly ignorant of the offence which had provoked the Lord thus to leave his people, he poured forth his complaint in this humble expostulation with God:

‘Alas! O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan. O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! for the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, will hear of it, and will environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?’

But the Lord soon roused up Joshua, telling him Israel had sinned, and had transgressed his covenant: and that was the reason why they could not stand before their enemies. For they had taken of the accursed thing, viz. of that which was devoted to destruction; and had stolen also some of those things that were devoted to the Lord; and dissembled, making as if they had brought it all into the treasury of the Lord; when as they had hid some of it to keep for their own use. Therefore the Lord bid Joshua up,

and bestir himself, to clear the camp of this accursed thing; for he would not be with them any more, 'Except they destroyed the accursed from amongst them.'

From this instance it is observable, that although it was but one man that was actually guilty, yet the guilt was charged upon the whole people; and they felt the effects thereof, until they convicted and punished the offender. Therefore the Lord bid Joshua proclaim among the people, 'There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.' Which that they might do, the Lord directed Joshua how he should find the offender out; and how he should be punished, when found and convicted.

Joshua therefore early next morning brought all the tribes before the Lord, and the lot being cast upon the tribes, the tribe of Judah was taken. Then going on by lot, from tribe to family, from family to household, and so to particular persons, the lot fell at last upon Achan. Whereupon Joshua said to Achan, 'My son, give I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done: hide it not from me.'

Herein we have an excellent example of a good judge examining the greatest criminal by gentleness, to draw him to a penitent confession; rather than by rigour, threats, or torture, to force from him a desperate discovery.

This gentle dealing had an answerable effect; for Achan thereupon thus made confession to Joshua: 'Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, said he, and thus and thus have I done. That is, when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment (which was of those things that were devoted to be destroyed) and two hundred shekels of silver, with a wedge of gold (in the form of a tongue, and therefore, in the margin called a tongue of gold) of fifty shekels weight, (which were of the things consecrated

to the Lord) then I coveted them, and took them, and hid them in the earth, in the midst of my tent.'

Joshua thereupon, for his more evident conviction, sent messengers to search Achan's tent: who finding the things hid, as he had confessed, brought them to Joshua and the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord.

Whereupon Achan being duly convicted, both by the notoriety of the fact, and his own confession, Joshua and all Israel took him, with the silver and the garment, and the wedge of gold (as evidence of his guilt) and with him his sons and his daughters, as accessaries, and all his cattle also, together with his tent, and all that he had, and brought them into a valley, which from him thenceforth took the name of the valley of Achor (for so was he called, and also Achar, 1 Chron. ii. 7.) where he and his family, being first stoned to death, were burned with fire; and a great heap of stones was raised over him, for a memorial and warning to others.

By this execution the anger of the Lord being appeased, he encouraged Joshua to go on in his work: bidding him not fear nor be dismayed; but take all the men of war with him, and go up against Ai. And assuring him, that he had given into his hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and land, he told him he should do to Ai and her king, as he had done to Jericho and her king; only, for the encouragement of the soldiers, he allowed them to take the spoil of the city and the cattle, for a prey to themselves. And withall God directed Joshua to lay an ambush for the city behind it. Which is the first ambush we read of in story.

Joshua therefore, thus encouraged and instructed, chose out thirty thousand mighty men of valour, and sent them away by night, with order to plant themselves behind the city, and as near to it as they could, without danger of being discovered; and to be all ready in arms; that when he with the army should have provoked the men of Ai to come forth to the battle, and by a feigned

flight should have drawn them off from the city, these, upon a signal to be given, by holding up a spear with an ensign or banner upon it, should run into the city, and set it on fire.

So well succeeded this stratagem, that thereby Ai was taken without a stroke: for Joshua, when he understood his ambush was safely laid, drew up his army before the city on the north side thereof, having a valley between it and him; where having pitched all day, in the sight of the city, he led down his army at night into the midst of the valley, to tempt the enemy, by the advantage of the place, to make a sally upon him, Josh. viii.

This bait took the king of Ai, who not willing to slip such an advantage, got up betimes in the morning, and drew out all his forces, to give Israel battle. They at first charge putting on an appearance of fear, turned their backs, and fled; which so animated the men of Ai, that calling out all their citizens to their assistance, they pursued after Joshua, till they were drawn away from the city, which in their haste, and confidence of victory, they had left open, and without a man in it to defend or guard it. Then did the Lord direct Joshua to give the signal to his men in ambush: which he had no sooner done, but they immediately rising out of their place ran into the city, and with all speed set it on fire.

When Joshua by the smoke perceived his men had possessed themselves of the town, rallying his forces, he turned upon the men of Ai; who looking behind them, and seeing their city in a flame, were so dispirited, that they had no power either to fight or to fly. Meanwhile the ambushers, who had possessed themselves of the city, issuing out upon them in the rear, the men of Ai being inclosed in the midst of Israel, were smitten down on every side, so that not one of them escaped.

The field thus cleared, the army marched to Ai, and smote it (that is, the women and children that were in it) with the edge of the sword; so that all the in-

habitants of Ai fell that day, being twelve thousand men and women. For Joshua drew not back his hand, wherewith he had stretched out the spear, until all the inhabitants of Ai were utterly destroyed. The cattle and spoil of the city, Israel took for a prey unto themselves; and then burning the city down to the ground, they made it an heap of rubbish.

The king of Ai, taken prisoner in the field, was brought to Joshua, and by his command hanged on a tree till evening. But as soon as the sun was gone down, he gave order that they should take his carcass down from the tree, in observance of the law, Deut. xxi, xxii, xxiii, and bury it under a heap of stones, at the entrance of the gate of the city.*

The victory thus by God's direction obtained, Joshua, in token of thankfulness, built an altar to the Lord God of Israel, in Mount Ebal, according as the Lord had by Moses commanded, Deut. xxvii. 5, and thereon he offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings. Which done, he not only read unto the people, both Israelites and strangers, the words of the law given by Moses; but wrote also upon great stones, plaistered over with plaister, a copy of the law which Moses had written; according as Moses had directed, Deut. xxvii. 2, 3, 4. So that it is not difficult to apprehend how divers of the Gentile nations came to imitate the Jews in many of their religious observances and rites, when the Mosaic law was so publicly exposed to the sight of all.

The report of the taking, sacking, and burning these two cities, Jericho and Ai, and putting all the inhabitants to the sword, alarmed all the kings which were on that side Jordan, viz. the Hittite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite, and Jebusite; and made them think it was high time for them to confederate among themselves, and enter into a common league for their mutual defence.

But while they were gathering their forces together, the inhabitants of Gibeon, who by nation were of the

Hivites, ver. 7, considering that policy would go beyond strength, resolved to try if they could save themselves by a wile.

They therefore sent out certain men, who should feign themselves to be ambassadors, come from a far country, to treat for peace, and enter in a league with Israel. And the better to persuade that they had come a great way, they took with them upon their asses old sacks and old wine bottles, that were torn and tied together, and old clouted shoes upon their feet, and all their garments old, and bread that was grown dry and mouldy.

Thus accoutred, they came to the Israelitish camp at Gilgal, and presenting themselves before Joshua, told him they were come from a far country, desirous to enter into a league with the people of Israel.

The men of Israel, somewhat wary, but not enough, answered, 'Peradventure ye dwell among us, and so possess part of that land which God hath given us : and how then shall we make a league with you ? And Joshua downright asked them ; Who are ye ? And from whence come ye ? They cunningly, but falsely, replied, We thy servants are come from a far country, because of the name of the Lord thy God : for we have heard the fame of him ; all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites. Wherefore our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, bid us take victuals with us for the journey, and go to meet you, and say unto you, we are your servants : therefore now make ye a league with us.' Then shewing their mouldy bread, their torn bottles, their old clothes and clouted shoes, they assured them that they took the bread hot out of their houses, when they came from home ; that their bottles were then new, and that their garments and shoes were worn old, by reason of the length of their journey, Josh. ix.

The Israelites had a sure way to have known the certain truth of this matter : for they had the unerring

oracle, the Urim and the Thummim, amongst them. But neglecting to ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord, they suffered themselves to be beguiled by the seeming simplicity of the subtle Gibeonites. And the Lord neglecting them, for their neglect of him, suffered them to believe a lie, and be deceived by the deceiver. So that the men of Israel giving a credulous ear to the Gibeonites' fair story, sufficiently (as they thought) confirmed by what their own eyes saw, received them into a league; Joshua making peace with them, to let them live, and the princes of the congregation swearing to observe the league.

But within three days after this hasty league was made, the Israelites came to understand that these new allies of theirs, whom they took to have come from some very remote country, were indeed but their neighbours, and dwelt among them, inhabiting a part of that land which God had given Israel to possess. And so near neighbours they were, that in three days' march Israel came to their cities; and fain would the army have fallen on them. But inasmuch as the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them, by the name of the Lord God of Israel, to observe the peace and league which Joshua and they had made with them, the army was not suffered to smite them.

Yet the soldiers, not pleased that they were deprived of so fair a prize as the rich cities of the Gibeonites would have yielded them, could not forbear murmuring against the princes. Which when the princes perceived, they endeavoured to pacify them; first, by letting them know the necessity they were now under of keeping their oath with them, lest they should incur the wrath of God, if they broke it. Next, that the league extending only to the saving of the Gibeonites' lives, not the exempting them from tribute or service, they might yet reap considerable advantages by them, if they were made hewers of wood, and drawers of water, unto all the congregation.

This being approved, Joshua calling for the Gibeonites, expostulated the matter with them thus, 'Where-

fore have ye beguiled us, pretending ye lived very far from us, when ye dwell among us?' They in excuse, answer, 'Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the Lord thy God commanded Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you: therefore we, being sore afraid of our lives because of you, have done this thing to save our lives.'

But though by this trick they did save their lives, yet did not this shift excuse them from being condemned to perpetual bondage. For Joshua denounced this sentence against them, 'Now therefore ye are cursed; and there shall none of you be freed from being bond-men, even hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the house of my God.' They, glad to escape so, replied, 'Behold, we are in thy hand, (at thy mercy) do to us what seemeth good and right unto thee.'

Thus Joshua, having delivered them from the children of Israel, that they slew them not, subjected them and their posterity to this service; that they should cut wood and draw water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, in the place which he should choose. And from their being thus given or dedicated to this service, their posterity, after the building of the temple, were called Nethinims, that is, given, in 1 Chron. ix. 2, and elsewhere often.

But though the Gibeonites had by their policy redeemed their lives, with the loss of their liberties, from the sword of Israel, yet had they a new reckoning to make with their old neighbours, the Amorites, who so ill resented their abandoning the common cause and interest, and making a private league for themselves only with Israel, whom they accounted, and without cause, their common enemy, that they resolved to take revenge of them. And in order thereunto Adonizedek king of Jebus, which afterwards in king David's time was called Jerusalem, inviting four other neighbouring kings to join with him, they all went up with their united forces, and encamped before Gibeon, to make war against it, Josh. x.

Though Gibeon was a great city, equal to one of the royal cities, and well manned; yet did not the Gibeonites think fit to rely upon their own strength: but forthwith dispatched their agents to Joshua's camp at Gilgal, to acquaint him that all the kings of the Amorites, that dwelt in the mountains, were gathered together against them; and to intreat him to come up with all speed to their relief.

Joshua having made a league with the Gibeonites, and made them vassals to Israel, held himself obliged, both in justice and interest, to defend them. To which also the Lord encouraged him; bidding him, 'Not fear the Amorite army:' for he had delivered them into his hand, and they should not be able to withstand him.

Arising therefore from Gilgal, with all his men of war, and marching all night, he came suddenly upon them: and the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter; and put the rest to flight. And as they fled, the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them: so that more of them died by the hail stones than by the sword.

The five kings, escaping the hail stones, betook themselves in their flight to a cave, at a place called Makkedah, and there hid themselves. Of which intelligence being given to Joshua, he gave order that great stones should be rolled upon the entrance of the cave, and a guard of men set by it, to keep them in till the pursuit was over: charging his men not to stay on that occasion, but to follow the chace, and do execution upon the enemies, before they got into their fenced cities.

And that they might not want time to complete the victory, and revenge themselves fully on their enemies, Joshua first addressing himself to the Lord by prayer, and receiving authority from God, commanded the sun, in the sight of Israel, saying, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon.' Whereupon the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about

a whole day; and the moon also staid her course, until Israel had avenged themselves upon their enemies.

This was a long day indeed, and there was no day like that before it, or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of man, so as thereupon to stop the planets in their courses. But the Lord fought for Israel.

Now after that Israel was returned from the chace, having slain all the enemies that could not get into the fenced cities; Joshua gave order to open the mouth of the cave, and bring out to him the five kings, who had hid themselves. Which being done, he called the captains of his men of war, in the sight of all the army, and bid them, 'Set their feet upon the necks of those kings:' and they did so. Then said he unto them, 'Fear not, nor be dismayed; but be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do unto all your enemies against whom ye fight.' By which act, he both animated the soldiers, and exhibited a type of a complete victory, which God had promised to crown them with, who fight valiantly under his banner, in the spiritual warfare, against the grand tyrant and adversary of the soul, Satan.

After he had thus triumphed over them, he smote the five kings, and slew them, and caused them to be hanged on five several trees until the evening: but then ordered them to be taken down, and cast into the cave, in which they had hid themselves: so making their designed sanctuary their sepulchre.

Thus, God who sometimes brings good out of evil, took occasion from that ill grounded league, which Joshua had made with the Gibeonites, to forward his own work, and hasten the destruction of his and his peoples' enemies. For by that means he destroyed five kings of the Amorites, with most of their people, in one day; which otherwise would probably have cost Israel much longer time and labour.

The victory thus obtained in the field, Joshua marched against the cities. First to Makkedah; then to Libnah; thence to Lachish: where also he smote

the king of Gezar, and his people, who came up to help Lachish. From Lachish, he passed on to Eglon; from Eglon to Hebron; and from Hebron he returned to Deber. All which places he took by storm, and put the inhabitants, both kings and people, men, women, and children, to the sword; destroying them with an utter destruction, according as the Lord had commanded, Deut. xx. 16, 17. And having performed such great exploits, and conquered so many kings and their lands in one expedition, through the assistance of the God of Israel, who fought for Israel, Joshua returned with his victorious army to his camp at Gilgal.

All these great achievements are by some chronologers reckoned to have been performed in the first year of Joshua's government: and our industrious countryman, R. Blome, places them all in the year of the world 2553. But with his favour, I should rather think they extended into, if they did not wholly take up the year 2555. But to proceed:

When Jabin, king of Hazor, heard of Israel's great successes, he thought it was in vain for the princes of Canaan to encounter singly, or with small forces, so puissant and victorious an army. Therefore he sent to Jobab, king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings that were on the north of the mountains, and of the plains, south of Chinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor, on the west: and to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and to the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh: inviting them all to enter into a confederate league, and with all their united forces to fall upon Israel.

Here was like to be work enough for Joshua at the next campaign, for all these kings, with their several hosts (so great in number, that they are hyperbolically said to be even as the sand on the sea shore for multitude, with horses and chariots very many) went out,

and pitched their camp together at the waters of Merom, to offer battle to Israel, Josh. xi.

But when the Lord saw their pride and presumption, he, to encourage Joshua, bid him 'Not to be afraid of them: for to-morrow, said he, about this time, will I deliver them up all slain before Israel; and thou shalt hough (that is, cut the hamstrings or sinews of) their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.'

Accordingly, Joshua taking the field, with all his men of war, marched directly towards the enemies, and fell suddenly on them; and the Lord delivered them into the hands of Israel, who smote them, and put them to flight, and in the pursuit slew them, till they left none remaining.

Then having houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots, as the Lord had bidden him, Joshua turned back, and took Hazor, and all the cities of those other kings, and put the kings and people of every city to the sword, not sparing any, but utterly destroying them.

And because Hazor had before-time been the head of all these kingdoms, and Jabin her king was the head of this confederacy, he caused that city to be set on fire, and burnt down: but all the other cities, whose inhabitants he had slain, he left standing, and gave the spoil thereof, and the cattle, for a prey to the children of Israel.

Thus did Joshua, by degrees, recover all the land of Canaan; subduing the nations and people that possessed it, and slaying all their kings, no less than one and thirty in number, with the Anakims, or giants, of which he left none remaining, save in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

But this work may be allowed to have taken up some time: and indeed, in Joshua xi. 18, it is said, 'Joshua made war a long time with all those kings;' and from Caleb's words, in chap. xiv. 6 and 10, where he says, it was five and forty years since he was sent to spy the land, it may be fairly gathered, that between six and seven years were spent in this war, Josh. xii.

The other things, which were mentioned afterwards in this book, may be supposed to have taken up the rest of Joshua's time. As namely, the dividing the land beyond Jordan among the nine tribes, and half tribe, by lot. (For the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, had their portions assigned and given them on the other side of Jordan by Moses himself, Numb. xxxii, which is here repeated, and their lots described.) Then the setting up the tabernacle at Shiloh, chap. xxiii. 1. The appointing cities of refuge for the man-slayer, chap. xx. The setting out cities for the Levites, some out of each tribe, chap. xxi. With other things of more particular concernment, Josh. xiii, xx, xxi.

The tribes thus settled in their several possessions; Joshua called to him the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh; and acknowledging to them that they had faithfully kept their covenant, in accompanying their brethren, and helping them to subdue the land, he kindly dismissed them, with good counsel and a blessing; wishing them to return to their own possessions and families. They therefore, taking their leave of their brethren at Shiloh, departed with much riches, consisting in silver, gold, brass, iron, much raiment, and very much cattle, being their part of the spoils of war taken from the enemies, and returned to their own country, Josh. xxii.

But when they were come to the borders of Jordan, there they built a great altar; not intending it for religious use, but to be as a witness or evidence to after ages, that though they were parted from the other tribes by the river Jordan; yet they were all brethren, of one stock, religion, and way of worship, and had equal right to the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, and to the worship performed thereat; of which altar at Shiloh, this which they set up was a true model.

It was not long before the other nine tribes and half (who are here, for distinction sake, called the children of Israel) had notice of this altar being set up. And the matter either being misrepresented to

them, or they in a warm zeal misapprehending it, and suspecting that their brethren on the other side Jordan intended to revolt from God and them, and to set up for themselves, assembled unanimously at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. But before they took up arms, they thought it adviseable to send ambassadors to them, and see if they would be reduced by fair means.

Choosing out therefore ten princes, one of each tribe, and each of them the head of his father's house ; they joined to them Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest (who for his bold and commendable zeal, in slaying Zimri and Cozbi, thereby suppressing a dangerous rebellion, stopping the plague, and making an atonement for Israel, Numb. xxv, had merited well, and was well accepted of all the tribes in general); and sent them away, to examine the cause of the new erected altar.

These being come to their brethren the Reubenites, Gadites, and half tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, fell bluntly on them with a kind of interrogatory charge, in the name of the whole congregation of the Lord, thus :

‘What trespass is this, said they, that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the Lord, in that you have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord :’

And to exaggerate the offence, they put them in mind of the sin of Peor, Numb. xxv, saying, ‘Is the sin of Peor too little for us (from which we are not cleansed to this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the Lord on that account) but that ye must turn away this day from following the Lord :’ and to let them see, that it was not from an over busy pragmatic mind, that they thus came to call them to account, but that they had reason to concern themselves in it, they added, If ye thus rebel against the Lord, he will quickly be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel.’

By which it appears, that if in a body or society of people, whether civil or religious, a public transgression, although committed by some particular members, be tolerated, that is, not condemned and removed by the rest ; it will subject the whole society, or body, to the guilt, and consequently to the punishment thereof.

This they confirmed by the late instance of Achan ; who committing a trespass in the accursed thing, wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel ; and that man perished not alone in his iniquity.

Then to prevent an objection, and take from them all pretence of excuse or defence, they added ; ‘ If ye have done this from an apprehension, that the land ye possess on that side Jordan is unclean, or less holy than ours, because the tabernacle of the Lord is in our part, come back again and settle among us, where the Lord’s tabernacle dwelleth : but by no means rebel against the Lord, nor against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the Lord.’

From which words we may observe, first, that to add to, or alter, the worship, or religious service, which God hath appointed, is to rebel against God. Secondly, that they who so rebel against the Lord, do therein rebel against his people ; and are accountable therefore not only to the Lord, but to his people also.

When the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, had heard this heavy charge, they were troubled that their brethren should entertain so ill an opinion of them : but knowing their own innocency, and the integrity of their intentions, in what they had done ; they applied themselves to inform their brethren aright, and thereby to remove the misconceived offence out of their minds.

Beginning therefore with a solemn appeal to God (whom to shew their high veneration of, and how far they were from turning from him, or preferring any other God to him, they call the God of gods) they return answer to Phinehas and his companions, the heads of the thousands of Israel, after this manner :

‘The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel also shall know, whether we have built us an altar in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord, with an intent to turn from following the Lord; or have set up this altar in opposition to the altar of the Lord, to offer burnt offerings, meat offerings, or peace offerings thereon; which we know the Lord hath forbidden. If we have done it to that end, let the Lord himself require it, and punish us for it; and do not ye spare us neither. But the truth is, we have done it for fear of such a thing, and to prevent it. For we considered, that in time to come, your children might say unto our children, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For since the Lord hath made Jordan a border and bound between us and you, ye have no part in the Lord; that is, ye do not belong to the congregation of the Lord; nor have any right to come before his tabernacle, nor to offer upon his altar, and so your children might be an occasion to make our children turn aside from serving the Lord. Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice, but to be a witness between us and you, and our generations after us; that when we should come to perform our service to the Lord, with our burnt offerings and our sacrifices before him, if your children should say unto ours, Ye have no part in the Lord; our children might reply, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not to sacrifice upon, but to be a witness between us and you. But as to the matter ye charge us with, God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord, and turn this day from following the Lord, to build an altar for burnt offerings, meat offerings, or sacrifices, besides the altar of the Lord our God that is before his tabernacle.’

This answer pleased Phinehas and the princes of the congregation so well, that they rejoiced at it; taking it for a confirmation that the Lord was still among them, in that their brethren the Reubenites, &c. had

been preserved from committing a trespass against the Lord, which they had been suspected of, and the whole congregation thereby delivered from the danger they feared.

Taking therefore their leave of them, Phinehas and his companions returned to the congregation of the children of Israel at Shiloh, to report to them the good tidings of their brethren's innocency, and of their godly care and zeal, that their posterity might be preserved in the fear and service of the true God; with which account the children of Israel were so pleased, that laying aside all thoughts of war, they blessed God for so good an issue. The Reubenites and the Gadites, to prevent any future suspicions of their intentions, called the Altar which they had built, ED, which signifies a witness; adding as the reason of the name, 'For it shall be a witness between us and our brethren, the other tribes of Israel, that the Lord is God:' as much as to say, the God of Israel is our God; they and we have but one and the same God.

Joshua being now grown old, and foreseeing his end to be near at hand, he called for all Israel, and for their heads, rulers, and officers, and briefly mentioning what the Lord had already done for them, and what he would yet further do for them, and enable them to do for themselves, if they were courageous and faithful to keep and do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, not in any thing turning aside therefrom; he warned them particularly not to come among those nations which yet remained unsubdued amongst them; nor entertain familiarity or society with them, Josh. xxiii; and to be so far from bowing unto their gods, or serving them, or causing any to swear by them, that they should not so much as make mention of their names, which also the Lord had before expressly forbidden, Exod. xxiii. 13.

This is fit for them to consider of, who, professing to be under a higher dispensation than that of Moses, do yet retain the names of heathenish gods, in naming their months and days.

Joshua now also told the Israelites, that although the Lord had hitherto fought for them, and had driven out great and strong nations from before them; yet if they should in any wise go back, to cleave unto the remnant of those nations that did yet remain among them, and should make marriages with them, and enter into friendship and familiar conversation with them, the Lord would no longer fight for them, nor drive out their enemies from before them; but those nations should be snares and traps unto them, scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes, and should cause them to perish from off that good land, which the Lord their God had given them.

Afterwards more particularly recounting the dealings of the Lord with them, and with their fathers, and going as high as Terah, the father of Abraham, (who dwelt on the other side of the flood, or great river Euphrates in Mesopotamia) he deduced the account from thence to his own time; briefly touching some of the most remarkable passages.

Then solemnly declaring, that whatever course the rest should take, he and his house would serve the Lord; he exhorted the people to fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and truth; and invited them to renew their covenant with God; which they having done in full and very significant terms, he wrote the words of their covenant in the book of the law of God, and setting up a great stone under an oak, by the sanctuary of the Lord, he bid the people take notice, that that stone (as if it had heard what had passed) should be a witness unto them, to put them in mind of the covenant that they had made, lest they should deny their God, Josh. xxiv.

Not long after this, Joshua having attained to the hundred and tenth year of his age, died, and was buried in the border of his inheritance, in Timnath-Serah, in mount Ephraim; which city, upon the division of the land amongst the tribes, the children of Israel, by God's direction, chapter xix. 49, 50, gave unto him,

in token of gratitude for the many benefits they had received by his ministry.*

Near the same time also died Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest; whom they buried in a hill, which was given him in mount Ephraim, which belongeth to Phinehas, his son and successor.

But the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt with them, they buried in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob had bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.

* A. M. 2570.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

**** All this Book is thought to have been written by Joshua; except some part of the last chapter, wherein mention is made of his death, which is supposed to have been written by Samuel the prophet.*

THE
Book of Judges:

CONTAINING AN HISTORY OF ABOUT THREE HUNDRED
YEARS.

By whom, and in what time, this book of the Judges was compiled and written, is very uncertain. Some think by Samuel, the last of the judges. Others by Ezra the scribe, long after.*

It relates first, that after the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked of the Lord who should first go up for them to fight against the Canaanites: and that the Lord had appointed Judah to go up; declaring, that he had delivered, or determined to deliver, the land into his hand, Judg. i.

Whereupon Judah invited his brother Simeon, whose lot lay within his, Josh. xix. 1, to go up with him into his lot, that they might assail the Canaanites with their joined forces: engaging to do the like for him afterwards. Simeon agreed, and the success of their undertaking was, that the Lord delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hand; and they slew of them ten thousand men in Bezek. Then pursuing Adonibezek their king, who fled, they caught him, and cut off his thumbs and great toes. This drew from him an acknowledgment of the justice of God upon him; for he, it seems (as himself confessed) had cut off the thumbs and great toes of no less than seventy kings; whom also, though so maimed, he caused to gather their meat like dogs under his table.

The old city Jebus, possessed hitherto by the Jebusites, who sprang from Jebusi, the third son of Canaan, Gen. x. 16, here called Jerusalem, lay in two parts, whereof one part fell into the lot of Judah, the other into that of Benjamin. Judah soon over-ran that part of it that belonged to him: and having put the inhabitants to the sword, set the place on fire.... But having brought the thumbless king Adonibezek with him thither, there he died.

Among the many places Judah now took, one was Kirjathsepher; which was a part of Caleb's portion, but possessed by the Canaanites. Caleb therefore, old though he was, as having out-run his eighty-fifth year, Josh. xiv. 10, 11, yet retaining his youthful strength and vigour, and resolving to storm the place, that he might encourage his men to the assault, made proclamation in his camp, that he would give Achsah his daughter to wife to him that should smite Kirjathsepher, and take it.

So great a prize raised the courage of the adventurous young men: and Othniel, a valiant soldier, somewhat of kin to Caleb (the text says he was Caleb's younger brother's son; as being, say Tremellius and Junius, of the posterity of Kenaz; from whom Caleb being descended, was therefore called the Kenazite, Numb. xxxii. 12, and Josh. xiv. 14) won the place, and thereby the fair prize, Caleb's daughter Achsah, whose name imports trim or neat.

She, when she came to Othniel, put him upon begging a field of her father. But not thinking him forward enough in his motion, she, allighting from her ass, addressed herself to her father; who asking her what her request was, she thereupon desired him in general terms to give her a blessing. But more particularly she said, 'Thou hast given me a south land (which though it might be pleasant, yet lying hot, was likely to prove dry and barren); give me also springs of water;' whereupon he gave her both the upper and the nether springs.

This strenuous old man Caleb, who was a prince of the tribe of Judah, took Hebron, which was part of

his portion, from the giants ; and expelled from thence the three sons of Anak.

But this tribe, strong and valiant though it was, and recovered from the Canaanites many places, as Zephath-gaza, Askalon, and Ekron ; and drove out the inhabitants of the mountains ; yet the inhabitants of the valley they could not drive out, because they had chariots of iron.

Neither did the children of Benjamin drive out the Jebusites that inhabited that part of Jerusalem that fell to them : but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in that part of Jerusalem.

The house of Joseph indeed, going up against Beth-el, did, by the assistance of the Lord, prevail. For they sending some to descry the city, the spies seeing a man come out of it, seized on him ; and promising to shew him mercy, if he would discover to them the entrance into the city, he shewed them the way. Whereupon they entering, put the inhabitants to the sword, and delivered that man and his family.

But in other parts of the country, neither did Manasseh, nor Ephraim, nor Zebulon, nor Asher, nor Naphthali, drive out the inhabitants of the land ; but suffered them to dwell promiscuously amongst them : nay, the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountainous parts, and kept them pent up there, not suffering them to come down to the valley.

By this means the Israelites, growing into acquaintance and familiarity with those heathen nations, did not drive them out ; no not when afterwards they grew strong enough to have done it : but contenting themselves to make them tributaries, and willing to entertain an intercourse of dealings with them, they let them continue to live amongst them.

This was directly contrary to the express command of God, Exod. xxiii. 32, 33, and Deut. vii. 2, &c. and not only proved a snare to them, but greatly displeased the Lord.

Wherefore the Lord, to reprove them, sent an angel, or messenger (so the word angel signifies, and so it is

explained here in the margin, and is supposed to be Phinehas the priest) to them, and laying before them the goodness of the Lord, and his favour to them in delivering them out of Egypt, and bringing them into that good land; his faithfulness in keeping his covenant with them, and their ingratitude and unfaithfulness, in not obeying the voice of the Lord, but acting quite contrary to his command, whereby they had provoked him to withdraw his help from them; the people thereupon seemed, for the present, so sensible of their fault, that they lifted up their voice and wept, and offered sacrifice to the Lord; calling the name of the place where they received this reproof, Bochim, which signifies weepers, Judg. ii.

Mention was made in Josh. xxiv. 31, and the same is repeated here, Judg. ii. 7; 'that the people of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he wrought for Israel. But when that generation was gathered to their fathers, and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet his works which he had done for Israel, ver. 10; the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, ver. 11; that is, the lesser or tutelar gods, so called, of the several nations about them.'

And indeed, scarce were their tears wiped off at Bochim, and their eyes dried, ere they, forsaking the Lord God of their fathers, followed other gods; as Baal, the chief and most general god of the heathens, and Ashteroth, the idol of the Zidionians, represented in the form of a sheep. Whereby they provoked the Lord to anger, so that he often gave them up into the hands of the spoilers, of which, and the deliverances he had wrought for them, upon their repenting and crying to him for help, a general account is given in this chap. from ver. 14, to the end.

It was because of their unfaithfulness and disobedience, that the Lord refusing to drive out their enemies for them, to whom they themselves were too

favourable, had suffered some of the nations to remain among them ; whom yet they ought to have kept at arms' end, and not to have entered into league, friendship or familiarity with. For beside that it was expressly forbidden in the law, Exod. xxiii. 32, and xxxiv. 12, repeated in Deut. vii. 2, 3, &c. Joshua but just before his death had particularly warned them of the danger they would run into, if they should entertain familiarity with any of those nations that were by God appointed to destruction. And above all things charged them to take care that they did not make marriages with them, as knowing how naturally that would lead to the worshiping of their gods, Josh. xxiii ; yet all that notwithstanding the children of Israel now indulging themselves the liberty to dwell among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, and growing into a neighbourly familiarity with them, they took their daughters to be wives, and gave their daughters for wives to their sons, and then what followed? 'and served their gods,' ver. 5, 6. So sure a rule it is, that strange marriages lead to strange worship.

Upon these high provocations, the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel ; and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, whose name signifies blackness of iniquities ; yet he did not sell them absolutely, and for ever, but for eight years ; in which time of apprenticeship and hard servitude the children of Israel, coming to a sense and acknowledgment of their transgressions, and crying unto the Lord for help, the Lord raised up a deliverer to them, Judg. iii.

This was Othniel (the same that had married Caleb's daughter) upon whom the spirit of the Lord came, which fitted him to judge Israel : and without some measure of which, none can be duly qualified to judge. He, in the strength thereof, going out to war, the Lord delivered the king of Mesopotamia into his hands, and he prevailed against him : and upon this defeat of the Syrians, the land had rest forty years ;

to be computed, as some think, from the death of Joshua, Judg. xxiii.

But after Othniel was dead, the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord. Of which two great instances are given in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of this book. Which though cast back to the end of the book, as if they belonged to later times, yet, by the judgment of divers learned men, were transacted about this time. By whose reasons persuaded, rather than prevailed on by the authority of their names, how great soever, I choose to insert those stories here, as the most likely time for such evils to have been committed in. For it is plain from the text, that these things happened when there was no king (that is, ruler ; for king in a proper sense there never yet had been) in Israel: but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. But not to be positive or over curious in a matter somewhat doubtful, whensoever this fell out, the matter of fact is delivered thus :

A certain devout woman, of the tribe of Dan, through a mistaken and ignorant zeal, had dedicated a sum of money unto the Lord, and laid it by, intending her son should make therewith a graven image, and a molten image. Her son, a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah, finding his mother's money, and not knowing what she intended to do with it, made bold to steal it from her. She missing her money, and not knowing who had robbed her, not at all suspecting her son, did, in her son's hearing, denounce a curse upon the thief (and as she reputed sacrilegious person) that had taken it. This wrought so far upon the son, that he thereupon confessing the fact, told his mother it was he that had taken her money, and having it still whole by him, he restored it to her, being eleven hundred shekels of silver. Which, if common shekels, at one shilling and three pence each, would raise to sixty-eight pounds and fifteen shillings of English money : but if shekels of the sanctuary, double that sum, Judg. xvii.

The mother having received her money again, took out two hundred shekels of it, and gave it to a founder ; who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image ; and they were set in Micah's house : for he, it seems, had a house of gods (that is, idols or images) : and made an ephod and teraphim, probably with the rest of the dedicated money, and consecrated one of his sons to be his priest for a while, till he could light upon a Levite.

If any should desire to be informed what teraphim was, authors tell us that teraphim were images, for the most part of men ; yet sometimes of other creatures, as particularly dogs, for their watchfulness in guarding the house. This latter sort were accounted the tutelar or protecting gods ; answerable to the lares and penates, or houshold gods, amongst the Romans. Those teraphim, which bore the image of a man, or at least the head of a man, were used as oracles, to be consulted with, and inquired of in any doubtful or hidden matter. These were consecrated by magical art, to engage some evil spirit to speak through them, and give answers to the enquirers. Laban's gods, which his daughter Rachel stole from him, Gen. xxxi. 19, are called teraphim (see the margin) and are thought by some to have been such oracular images ; and that she therefore took them, that her father might not, by consulting with them, know which way her husband was gone. But it looks too gross ; I rather think they were but the common penates, or houshold gods. See Godwyn's *Moses and Aaron*, l. 4, c. 9, and D'Assigny's *History of the Heathen Gods*, lib. 1, chap. 15, for further information.

Now though the times were evil, and the people for want of government, and by intermingling with the heathen nations, had corrupted their ways, yet it is hard to conceive that they could be already so far degenerate, as to set up those oracular images to ask counsel of the devil by. But it is probable they thought they might worship God by or through images (as too many who are called Christians at this day do) ; for it

is evident that Micah's mother dedicated her money to the Lord, which she designed for the making of images, Judg. xxvii. 3, and Micah himself, when he made the teraphim, made also an ephod, ver 5, which was the garment appointed by God for the priests to wear, Exod. xxviii. 4, and by which they did ask counsel of God, 1 Sam. xxx. 7, 8.

We observed before, that Micah, for want of a Levite, had appointed one of his own sons to officiate for him as a priest, till he could get one; which was not long first: for in a little while, a certain young man that was a Levite, and had sojourned at Beth-lehem Judah, departing from thence to get a place, came in his journey to Micah's house in mount Ephraim. But that he, being a Levite, was of the family of Judah, is not easy to be apprehended.

Micah asking him whence he came, and he answering that he was of Beth-lehem Judah, and was going to sojourn where he could find a place; Micah invited him to tarry there, and dwell with him, and be unto him a father, and a priest; offering him for his wages, ten shekels of silver by the year, and his victuals, and two suits of apparel, one for common wearing, and the other to minister in. If these shekels were of the sanctuary, the ten would amount to twenty-five shillings sterling; but if they were common shekels, they would come to but half that money. However, the Levite liking the terms, was content to dwell with Micah; and so went in and became one of his family. Micah, on the other hand, was much pleased in the hope and confidence he now had, that the Lord would do him good, seeing he had got a Levite to be his priest.

Who this young man was, is hard to say. He is called Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, chap. xviii. 30. But who this Manasseh was, who can tell? Tremellius and Junius call Jonathan *Pronepos Mosehis, ex Manasseh*. Annot. on Judg. xvii. 1: as if Manasseh had been Moses' son, Gershom Moses' grandson, and this Jonathan Moses'

great-grandson. But since we read of no more than two sons that Moses had, to wit, Gershom and Eliezar, Exod. xviii. 4, where must we seek for his son Manasseh, whereby to make Gershom not his son, but his grandson? The old Latin translation, which is called Jerom's, reads it Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses: and Broughton says, the Hebrews read, Moses for Manasses. Which sounds most likely, if any such Jonathan, son of Gershom, can be found, and whose age may suit the time of the story.

Whoever this young Levite was, he had not long settled with Micah, ere an accident fell out, which unsettled him again. The occasion and manner thereof was thus:

The lot of the tribe of Dan, which fell to them upon the division of the land in Joshua's time, proving too little for them, Josh. xix. 47, and they not enjoying all that neither, for the Amorites would not suffer them to possess the valley, which was the best and richest part; but forced them up into the mountainous or hilly part, Judg. i. 34; the children of Dan were forced to seek out for more room, to enlarge their quarters. Wherefore choosing out five valiant men of their family, they sent them forth to spy and search the land, Judg. xvii.

These coming to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, lodged there, and knowing the young Levite by his voice, they asked him who brought him thither; and what he made (or what business he had) in that place; he told them what agreement Micah had made with him: and that he was hired, and that he was Micah's priest. When they heard that, they desired him to ask counsel of God, that they might know whether their journey would be prosperous or no. He bid them go in peace; for their way was before the Lord (meaning their undertaking was approved by the Lord).

With this encouragement on they went, till they came to a city called Laish. Where entering, and making their observations, they took notice that the people there lived very secure and careless, and with-

out all manner of discipline or government ; for there was no magistrate in the land, that might order or restrain them, and that they were far from succours, and had no allies ; so that they concluded it would be no difficult matter to overcome them, and possess that place. And with that report they returned to their brethren that had sent them out ; giving account that the land they had searched was large, and very good, abounding with all the necessary conveniences and accommodations ; that the people lived so securely, that they might be surprized and subdued. And to quicken them to the undertaking, told them, ‘ God had given that land into their hands.’

Thus encouraged, the Danites sent forth a colony of six hundred men, well armed, to go and possess themselves of the city of Laish. These marching through mount Ephraim, came in their way to the house of Micah. And making a halt there, the five men, who in searching the country had been there before, and went now as guides to the party, acquainted there brethren, that there was in that house an ephod and teraphim, and a graven and a molten image : wishing them thereupon to consider what they had to do ; that is, whether they had best tarry there, to ask counsel of the Lord, concerning the success of their enterprize, or take the ephod and images with them, to consult with them upon all occasions.

The event shews they thought this last the best : for the five men that were the guides, leaving the whole party without the gate, turned in ; and Micah himself being from home, they saluted the Levite, and sent him forth to the Danites at the gate. And while he was held in discourse abroad, the guides knowing the rooms in the house, as having been there before, went in, and taking the ephod, the teraphim, and the other images, brought them out to their brethren at the gate.

This startled the young priest ; and he briskly asked them, ‘ What they meant to do ?’ But they soon silenced him, bidding him, ‘ Lay his hand upon his mouth, and hold his peace, and go with them :’ put

ting him to consider whether were it better for him to be priest unto the house of one man, or unto a tribe and a family of Israel.

The advantage and preferment he was like to have by this change tickled the young priest; so that it is said, 'The priest's heart was glad.' So early, it seems, did this itch of shifting from a lesser to a greater benefice seize some of that function. Not staying therefore to take his leave of his old master, away ran the priest with this new company, taking with him the ephod, and the images, whereby he made himself an accessory at least, to their theft, and on they marched together; putting the little ones, with their cattle and the carriages, before them.

When Micah came home, and understood that both his priest and his gods were gone, he gathered his neighbours together, and followed after the Danites. But they having got the start of him, were gone a good way from his house before he could overtake them. At length when he came near, and sent his out-cry before him, some of the Danite soldiers facing about, asked Micah 'What he ailed, that he came with such a company?' Why, said he, 'Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest; and what have I more? And do you ask me what I ail?' O, said they to him, 'Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee; and thou and thy company loose your lives.' Poor Micah, finding himself over-matched, was obliged to put up with the wrong, as he thought it, and return home without either gods or priest: a great gainer, had he rightly understood it, by the loss of both.

Meanwhile the Danites, continuing their march, came in a while to Laish; and finding the people quiet and secure, they set the city on fire: by which means they, comparatively but few in number, had the advantage of falling upon the citizens while they were busied in quenching the fire, and put them all to the sword.

Afterwards rebuilding the city, they called it Dan, after the name of their father. And settling there, they set up Micah's graven image, which having stolen, they had brought with them; and making the young Levite, Jonathan, their priest, he and his sons continued to officiate as priest to the tribe of Dan, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh, until the captivity of the land: which is reckoned to be till the ark, in Eli's time, was taken by the Philistines, 1 Sam. iv, about three hundred years after this.

As this is an instance of great apostacy and corruption in religion, so that which follows is as pregnant a proof of immorality and foul depravation of manners. And thus it was:

A certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, took him a concubine out of Beth-lehem Judah. She it seems, being a light woman, had played the harlot: and thereupon, either for fear or shame, left her husband, and ran home to her father at Beth-lehem Judah, where she remained full four months. In which time her husband, having somewhat digested the injury, he went at the four months' end to her father's, intending to be reconciled to her, and bring her back with him; in order to which, he took with him a servant and a couple of asses, Judg. xix.*

Being come thither, she brought him into her father's house, and her father received him with much joy, being glad to see him, and entertained him three days. On the fourth day morning, getting up betimes, they prepared to be going; but the woman's father would not let them go till they had eaten: and after they had eaten, he prevailed with his son-in-law to tarry one night longer. Next day he kept them until afternoon; and then alledging that it was too late to set out upon a journey, would have persuaded his son-in-law to have staid that night also. But he being now fully resolved to be gone, would not yield to his father-in-law's importunity; but taking leave of him, set his concubine upon one of his asses, and himself mounting the other, departed with his servant.

* Supposed to be circumcised, A. M. 1516;

By that time they were got as far as Jebus, that part of Jerusalem which belonged to Benjamin, but was possessed mostly by the Jebusites, the day was far spent; and the servant fearing to be benighted, desired his master to turn in thither, and take up his lodging there. But the master considering that Jebus was a strange city, not then fully possessed by the children of Israel, would not go thither: but bid his man go on, that, if possible, they might reach Gibeah or Ramah to lodge in.

Gibeah belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; whither they got just as the sun went down, and sat them down in a street of the city, as the manner of travellers then was, waiting to see who would invite them to a lodging.

At length came an old man from his work, out of the field; who seeing a way-faring man in the street, went to him; and saluting him, asked him whence he came, and which way he was travelling.

The Levite told him that he was of mount Ephraim, had been at Beth-lehem Judah, and was now returning to the house of the Lord at Shiloh: but that no man offered him a lodging, though he had provisions for himself and his company, and provender for his cattle; so that he need not be chargeable to any body.

The hospitable old man, who himself was of mount Ephraim also, though he dwelt at Gibeah, courteously invited him to lodge at his house; bidding him not trouble himself about provisions, but let all his wants lie upon him.

Taking them therefore home with him, when he had given the asses provender, and the guests, as the manner of travellers in those eastern countries then was, had washed their feet, they all sat down to supper.

But before they had done eating, behold, the men of the city, wicked men as they were, having beset the house round, beat at the door, to have broken it: but it not breaking, they called to the master of the house, just as the Sodomites did to Lot, saying, 'Bring forth the man that came into thy house, that we may know him.'

The good old man, to prevent danger to his guests, ventured himself amongst the tumultuous rabble, intreating them, by the gentle compellation of brethren, to give over their foolish undertaking; and not be so wicked, as to violate the laws of hospitality. And as Lot did of old, to pacify them, offered them his only daughter, who was a virgin, and the Levite's concubine, to use and abuse at their pleasure, so they would not offer any violence to his guest himself; but they would not hearken to him.

When therefore the Levite saw that the men grew more outrageous, he, to save himself, turned his concubine out among them; and her they abused all night, not letting her go till break of day: and then the poor woman, returning to the house where her lord lay, fell down dead at the door thereof, with her hands upon the threshold.

In the morning when her lord opened the door, and saw his concubine lying there, he, thinking she had been asleep, said to her, 'Up, and let us be going.' But when, she not answering, he perceived she was dead, he took her up, and laying her upon his ass, got him home as fast as he could. And as soon as he was come home, taking a knife, he divided his concubine, the flesh with the bones, into twelve pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel, to every tribe a piece; that so the whole house of Israel, being made sensible of the injury, might revenge it.

A thing so barbarous in itself, and represented in a manner so abhorrent from nature, made deep impression on the minds of the Israelites in general. All that saw it said, 'There was no such deed done or seen, since the day that the children of Israel came up out of Egypt.' And that they might acquit themselves from the guilt of so heinous a crime, by doing justice on the offenders, the whole congregation of the children of Israel was gathered together, as one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, that is, from one end of the land to the other, with the land of Gilead, unto the Lord in Mizpeh, which signifies judgment, that there they might examine the business before the Lord.

When therefore all the chief of the people out of all the tribes of Israel, no fewer than four hundred thousand footmen, that drew the sword, had presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, they required the Levite (the men of Gibeah having had notice, and not appearing) to give them an account how this wickedness was committed, Judg. xx.

He, in answer, thus related the matter to them: 'I came into Gibeah, that belongs unto Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge. And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about me by night, intending to have slain me: but my concubine they have forced, and she is dead; whereby they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel. Whereupon I took my concubine, and having cut her in pieces, I sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel. Now ye, being children of Israel, are concerned in this abuse, as well as I; therefore consider and advise what is to be done.'

When the people had received this account of the matter, they were highly incensed against the men of Gibeah; and unanimously resolved not to return to their houses, unless they received satisfaction from Gibeah, until they had brought the offenders to punishment. Wherefore they determined, that if the men of Gibeah should refuse upon demand to deliver up the criminals to justice, they would go up against Gibeah by lot, and chastise the men of Gibeah, according to all the folly they had wrought in Israel.... And that they might have no diversion or hindrance, they agreed to draw forth ten men out of every hundred, an hundred out of every thousand, and a thousand out of every ten thousand: whose business it should be to fetch and bring provisions and necessities for the army.

Thus resolved, they sent men throughout all the tribe of Benjamin, to lay the weight of this matter before them, and to demand those men, the men of Belial, that were in Gibeah, who had committed this

outrageous villainy, to be delivered up to them, that they might put them to death, and thereby put away this great evil from Israel.

But the children of Benjamin, instead of joining with their brethren to do justice on those malefactors, resolved, in contempt of their brethren the Israelites, to stand by them and defend them. And in order thereunto, they gathered themselves together, out of their other cities, to Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel.

The Israelites that came against Gibeah were, upon the muster, four hundred thousand fighting men. Whereas the Benjamitish army consisted of but six and twenty thousand, besides the men of Gibeah, which were but seven hundred. A bold undertaking sure it was, for so small a body to stand against so great an host. But as the cause was bad, so the men were desperate.

On the other hand, the Israelites, in their strength and numbers over confident, despised the Benjamites because they were so few. And determining of themselves the justness of the cause, never went to ask counsel of God, whether they should make war upon their brethren, or no. But taking that for granted, that no emulation and difference might arise among the tribes about precedence in this service, they went up to the house of God only to know which of the tribes should lead the van in that expedition; and the lot fell to Judah.

The Israelitish army thereupon advancing, sat down before Gibeah, and offered battle to the Benjamites. Whereupon the Benjamites, making a brisk sally, cut down two and twenty thousand of them; and retreated into Gibeah with very little loss.

This unexpected disaster much troubled the Israelites; and they now saw it was needful to enquire of the Lord not only who should go up first to the battle, but whether they should go to the battle at all, or not. Wherefore, weeping before the Lord, they now ask counsel of him, whether they should go up again to

battle against the children of Benjamin, their brother, or not: and the Lord bid them go up against him.

Whereupon encouraging themselves, they drew up their forces again before Gibeah, and offered battle to the Benjamites; who, making another bold sally, slew eighteen thousand more of them.

With this second loss the children of Israel were much dejected. Wherefore now, being more sensible of their former presumption and neglect, they humbled themselves before the Lord; and all the people, going up to the house of the Lord, wept, and fasted before the Lord that day until the evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. After which they inquired more regularly of the Lord, whether they should yet again go forth to battle against the children of Benjamin, their brother, or should forbear. For the ark of the covenant of God was then in Shiloh; and Phinehas, the son of Eleazer, the son of Aaron, stood before it; that is, was priest, in those days. Which (rejecting that Rabbinical dream, that Phinehas lived three hundred years) shews that this story fell early in the times of the judges. And now the Lord, having corrected the Israelites for their presumption and self-confidence, bid them go up again against the Benjamites, assuring them, that to-morrow he would deliver them into their hands: as no doubt he had done at the first, if they had then gone the right way to work.

Now was the battle prepared the third time. But the men of Israel, that they might at length make sure work, resolved to use a stratagem; laying an ambush in the meadows behind Gibeah; with direction, that when the battle should be joined, and the Israelites, by a feigned flight, should have drawn the Benjamites from the city, the men in ambush seizing the city, should set it on fire, as a signal to the Israelites to rally and renew the fight.

Accordingly ten thousand chosen men of Israel presenting themselves before Gibeah, the Benjamites issuing forth, fell fiercely upon them, and slew

about thirty of them. Whereupon the rest retiring as if they fled, the Benjamites flushed with their former victories, concluded the day was their own ; and supposing them to fly in earnest, pursued with all their force, till they were gone so far from the city, that the men who lay in ambush, rushing in, set it on fire. Which when the Israelites saw, they faced about, and charging furiously on the Benjamites, made them give back, and turn head, to secure themselves in their city.

But when by the smoke and flame they saw they were circumvented, they fled before the men of Israel, unto the way of the wilderness. But being inclosed between the main army of the Israelites, and that party of them which were laid in ambush (who having set the town on fire, fell in upon the Benjamites) they were chased and trodden down with ease. So that there fell of them that day, in the battle and in the pursuit, five and twenty thousand and one hundred men. And a thousand more having been destroyed, some in the former battles, some in Gibeah, when it was taken and burnt, there remained but six hundred men of the Benjamites : who flying to the rock Rimmon, and hiding themselves there, by that means saved their lives ; all the rest of the tribe of Benjamin being cut off. For the men of Israel, having cleared the field, turned again, in their martial heat, upon the children of Benjamin, in every city, and put them to the sword, both man and beasts, setting on fire also all the cities of Benjamin that they came to.

Thus did that whole tribe pay dear for refusing to do justice on some of their offending members. Which may be a good caution to all others to beware how they neglect justice.

But when the men of Israel came in cool blood to consider the slaughter they had made of the Benjamites, and to how low a condition that tribe was thereby reduced, they were greatly troubled : and the rather for that, upon their first engaging in this quarrel, they had, by an hasty and unadvised oath, bound

themselves before the Lord, that none of them should give his daughter to a Benjamite to wife ; which tended to the utter extirpation of that tribe.

The sense of this brought grief upon them : so that going to the house of God (to wit, the tabernacle where the ark was) they abode there till evening before God, and with lifted up voices wept sorely, saying, ‘ O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel ? ’ And getting up early next morning, they built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord, Judg. xxi.

Then applying themselves to find out some expedient whereby to elude their rash oath, and save the sinking tribe, they called to mind that they had also at the first bound themselves by a great oath, that whosoever of the other tribes of Israel should neglect or fail to come up to the Lord at Mizpeh, on that occasion, to join with their brethren against the Benjamites, he should surely be put to death. Whereupon they made a search ; and, by numbering the people, found that there came none from Jabesh-Gilead to the assembly at the camp.

It was indeed a great fault in these Gileadites, that in a common cause, where such a wickedness was committed by some few, as, if not punished, would bring a judgment upon the whole commonwealth of Israel, they should appear so unconcerned, as if they favoured the fact. But the proceeding of their brethren, the children of Israel, against them, seems very severe. For without sending (that appears) to know the reason of their not coming, they sent away twelve thousand of their ablest men, with positive commission to fall upon Jabesh-Gilead, and put all to the sword, man, woman, and child, except only such marriageable young women as had never lain with men : all which they were to save, and bring with them to the camp ; and so they did, bringing four hundred virgins back with them.

When these four hundred damsels were come, the congregation sent heralds to treat with the Benjamites,

that were in the rock Rimmon, to offer them peace and safety, and invite them to return. These poor creatures, having lain hid there four months, willingly embracing the offer, they came to the camp, and the congregation bestowed on them those Gileaditish maidens for wives: but the Benjamites being six hundred, and these damsels but four hundred, there was not for every man one.

This set their wits at work again. They concluded that some way must be found to preserve that tribe from being utterly destroyed; but hard it was to find a way, having barred themselves of giving them any of their daughters for wives.

At length they bethought themselves that there was a feast of the Lord holden at Shiloh every year, to which the daughters of Shiloh used to come, and celebrate the same with dancing before the Lord.

They therefore directed the Benjamites, that wanted wives, to go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and when they should see the Shiloh damsels come forth and be busy in dancing, they should suddenly break forth upon them; and catching every man one for his wife, carry them away into the land of Benjamin.

And that they might not fear an after-clap from the relations of the maids so taken, they told them, if the maids' fathers or brethren, come to us (who are the heads of the tribes) to complain of you, we will intreat them to be favourable unto you for our sakes, because we were to blame, in not reserving to every one of you a wife in the war. And if they should be scrupulous of having broke their oath, we will tell them they did not, at this time, give you their daughters, but ye took them.

The Benjamites thus instructed and secured, watched the time; and catching up every one of them a dancing damsel, went off with them into their own inheritance: where, repairing their cities, they settled again, and in time recruited their tribe.

In all this we may see how wretched a thing it is to be without government: for these things happened in those days when there was no ruler in Israel.

But these so heinous sins provoked the Lord to chastise Israel again by their enemies. Wherefore he strengthened and encouraged Eglon king of Moab against them, and made him a scourge to them ; who else had neither strength nor courage to have attacked Israel. But being thus stirred up, Eglon gathering unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm-trees. And as it was an aggravation of their offence, that having been redeemed from thralldom before, they did so soon transgress again, so far an aggravation of their punishment, their servitude was now advanced from eight years (which was the term of their former bondage) to eighteen ; for so long they served the king of Moab.

Yet when the children of Israel, under the sense of their misery, cried again to the Lord, he raised them up another deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, a left-handed man, of the tribe of Benjamin, Judg. iii.*

Ehud did not go to work, as Othniel had done, by plain and open war ; which perhaps Israel, weakened by eighteen years' servitude, and the tribe of Benjamin especially, by the blow they had received but a little before (in the Levite's case) might not then be in a condition to undertake. But he contrived first to take off Eglon privately ; as knowing it would be much easier to deal with the Moabites, when they should be in confusion for want of a leader, than while they had their king at the head of them.

Repairing therefore to the Moabitish court, under pretence that he had a present to deliver to the king from his servants, the children of Israel, he was admitted to the king's presence. And when he had delivered his present, and sent away his servants that brought it thither, he himself, returning alone, told the king he had a private message to him : whereupon the king bidding him keep silence till the company had quitted the room, all the king's attendance withdrew.

Ehud then, drawing near to him, said, 'I have a message from God unto thee.' At that word the king, in reverence to the name of God, arose out of his seat, not expecting so sharp a message as he received.

Meanwhile Ehud, with his left hand drawing forth a dagger (or two-edged sword of half a yard long, which he had provided for that purpose, and had privately girded under his garment upon his right thigh) thrust it suddenly into the king's belly; and that so forcibly, that the haft went in after the blade. And the king being a very fat man, the fat of his belly closed over the dagger, so that he could not draw it out; and there he lay wallowing in his own blood. But none, I hope, will draw this act of Ehud's into example.

When Ehud saw that king Eglon was dead, he went out of the room, shutting the door after him, and locking it. And when the king's servants saw Ehud depart, they returned to give their usual attendance on their master. But when they found the door locked, they waited without; supposing he was gone to ease nature; which they modestly expressed by a cleanly phrase, that he covered his feet in his summer chamber. Upon this consideration they tarried till they were ashamed: but when they saw that he opened not the door, they at length took a key, and opened it. And then, to their amazement, they found their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.

Their delaying gave Ehud a fair opportunity to escape; which he did. And when he was come to mount Ephraim, blowing a trumpet, he quickly gathered the children of Ephraim about him. Unto whom he said, 'Follow me, for the Lord hath delivered your enemies, the Moabites, into your hands.' They thereupon following him, as their leader, went down from the mount; and securing the fords of Moab towards Jordan, suffered not a man to pass over: but falling courageously upon the Moabites, slew about ten thousand of the chief of them; and both delivered Israel, and subdued Moab, that day.

By means whereof, and of an additional help which they received afterwards by Shamgar, the son of Anath, a strong and valiant man, who, no better armed than with an ox-goad, slew six hundred men of the Philistines, and thereby delivered Israel from evil neighbours on that side also, the land (that is, the people of Israel, land being put, by a metonymy, for the inhabitants thereof) had rest fourscore years. Which number of years, as well as the forty years assigned before to Othniel, have troubled chronologers to calculate, and of them divers go divers ways. I, not designing to labour on that subject, as not holding it essential to my present undertaking, taking (for the most part) the years as I find them in the text, proceed with the history.*

In so long a time of liberty and ease, Israel forgot their former bondage ; and making an ill-use of so great a mercy, they did evil again in the sight of the Lord : who therefore sold them again, for their correction and amendment, into the hands of Jabin ; who assuming to himself the title of king of Canaan, reigned then in Hazor.

This Jabin seems to have been a strong and powerful prince ; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron. And doubtless he was a cruel scourge to Israel ; for he mightily oppressed them twenty years together. Thus as their sins grew greater, their servitude was made longer ; from eight to eighteen years before : and now to twenty. During which time they were so sharply dealt with, that they durst not travel the common roads upon their ordinary occasions of commerce and trading, but were forced to seek out by-ways, to avoid their enemies ; so that the highways were disused. Neither could they, with safety, dwell in their villages ; being assaulted by their enemies' archers, if they went but down to draw water. And besides they were not suffered to keep any arms, if it were known that they had any ; but what arms they had they were

* A. M. 2720.

obliged to hide ; ‘ that there was not a sword or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel ;’ so servile was their thralldom, Judg. iv.

But still the Lord, in the midst of his judgments, remembered mercy : and when his people, brought through suffering, to a sense of their sins, cried unto him, he found means to work out their deliverance for them ; and that at this time, after this manner.

There dwelt in Israel a prophetess, whose name was Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth ; and she is said to have judged Israel at that time : and the children of Israel were wont to come to her for judgment. By which it appears, that God (who is elsewhere said to be no respecter of persons, Acts x. 34) is not so great a respecter of sexes as some think him, but that he can give judgment to his people, through male or female, as it pleaseth him. For since the judgment is God’s, Deut. i. 17, it ought to be received as such, whatever the instrument be through which it is conveyed.

To this good prophetess the Lord appeared, and by his spirit directed her to send for Barak, the son of Abinoam, a brave young prince of the tribe of Naphtali. He being come, she acquainted him with the Lord’s command, that he should go and draw together ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead them towards Mount Tabor.

This was an hazardous undertaking for Barak : therefore to encourage him, she (speaking in the name and place of God) said, ‘ I will cause Sisera, the captain-general of Jabin’s army, to come forth against thee to the river Kishon, with his chariots and his multitude, and I will deliver him into thine hand.’

Barak, considering the greatness of the enterprize, and holding it necessary to have the prophetess with him (both for counsel to himself on all occasions, and for encouragement to his men) told her, ‘ If she would go with him, he would ; else not.’ She replied, ‘ I will surely go with thee ;’ but withall pleasantly told him, ‘ This expedition would not be for his honour

for the Lord would sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.' Then departing together to Kadesh, where Barak lived, he quickly listed ten thousand volunteers out of Zebulun and Naphtali, and led them to Mount Tabor, the prophetess accompanying him.

Notice of this insurrection was soon given to Sisera; who thereupon gathering together his nine hundred chariots of iron, and all his people that were with him, which made a very great host, drew them down to the river Kishon.

Which when the courageous prophetess saw, her spirit being divinely guided, she gave the signal to the battle, by saying to Barak, 'Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand. And is not, added she, the Lord gone out before thee?'

With that Barak drew forth his men, and marching down from Mount Tabor, joined the battle with Sisera. And the Lord discomfited Sisera, with all his host, before Barak. For the elements were stirred up against the Canaanites, so that they fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, pouring down storms of rain and hail, with furious winds upon them; and the river Kishon swept them away.

Nor did Barak's sword spare any: but like lightning (as his name imports) he flew amongst them; and having put them to the rout, followed close upon the pursuit, not suffering any to escape. Only Sisera, king Jabin's general, not finding safety in his chariot, leaped down, and betaking himself to his heels, avoided Barak's sword, to die an inglorious death. Which thus happened:

Heber, the Kenite (who was of the posterity of Hobab, otherwise called Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and whose people went up with the children of Judah, to dwell amongst them, Judg. i. 16) had removed his family from the rest of the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, not far from Kadesh, where Barak lived.*

* A. M. 2553.

These Kenites, though, being proselytes, they worshipped the true God according to the Mosaic way, yet being strangers by birth, and not of the promised seed, and so not pretending a right or title to the land of Canaan, they held it best policy, in those troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace, as much as might be, with both the Levites and the Canaanites.

Upon this footing it was, that there was a peace between king Jabin, and the house of Heber the Kenite. And that gave confidence to Sisera, now in distress, to betake himself, in his flight, to the tent of Jael, Heber's wife, for refuge.

She, seeing him coming, went out to meet him, and invited him to come in without fear. And he, glad of the invitation, and not suspecting danger from her, whose husband was his master's ally, went confidently in. And being through heat and the toil of the day extremely thirsty, intreated her, in the first place, to give him a little water to drink : instead of which, she, opening a bottle, gave him his fill of milk, or, as some think, of butter-milk.

Having with this allayed his thirst, he desired her to stand in the door of the tent ; directing her, that if any body should come to ask if he was there, she should say no. Thus he instructed her to deceive others, who herself, meanwhile, was contriving how to deceive him.

Now thinking himself secure, he laid himself down upon the floor ; and she spread a coverlet over him. But long he had not lain, ere through much weariness he fell fast asleep. Which when she perceived, she took a hammer in her right hand, and a long nail (or stake of the tent) in her left ; and pitching it upon the temples of his head, smote upon it with that strength and force, that she drove it clear through his head, and fastened it into the ground : and having him at that advantage, she smote off his head, and so left him.

Then going to the door of the tent, to see whom she could find to impart the good news unto, she soon

perceived Barak himself coming upon the pursuit after Sisera. Glad of the occasion, she went out to meet him; and inviting him in, told him she would shew him the man he sought after. He thereupon following her in, saw Sisera there lying dead on the floor, with the nail in his temples.

By this means God subdued Jabin, king of Canaan, before the children of Israel: who thenceforward went on prevailing against him, until they had destroyed him.

The victory thus obtained, and Israel's deliverance thereby accomplished, the noble Deborah and valiant Barak meeting, sang an heroic epinicion, or triumphant song of praise, unto the Almighty, which read in chapter the fifth.

A time of rest succeeded now, within the compass of which the story of Ruth is generally, and with good probability, supposed to fall: but the rise and occasion thereof must be sought a little higher.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

THE
Book of Ruth.

IN the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, which caused an Israelite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Elimelech, to remove with Naomi his wife, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, and go to sojourn in the land of Moab, Ruth i.*

Long they had not been there, before Elimelech himself died. After which Mahlon and Chilion, not duly observing the law of God, took each of them a wife of the women of Moab: the name of Chilion's wife being Orpah; and the name of Mahlon's, Ruth.

After they had dwelt there about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion died also; and poor Naomi was left in a strange country, bereft of both husband and children, having only her two daughters-in-law with her; three widows in one family. Wherefore being weary of staying in a place where she had lost the chief outward comforts of her life, and having heard that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread (so that the famine was over in Israel) she set forward to return to the land of Judah, her two daughters-in-law accompanying her.

Being on the way, she considered that though she was going to her own country, her daughters were going from theirs. Wherefore in kindness to them, she advised them to go back, and return each of them to her mother's house. And to shew that it was for their sakes, not out of any dislike to their company,

that she was willing to part with them ; she bestowed a kind and motherly blessing upon them, saying, ‘ The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with my sons, your husbands, who are dead, and with me. The Lord grant you, added she, that ye may find rest each of you in the house of her husband’ (that is, that ye may marry again to your content, and enjoy a happy settlement). Then kissing them, as taking her leave of them, they could no longer contain ; but lifting up their voices, they wept, and assured her they could not so part with her, but would accompany her, now that she returned to her people.

She using many arguments to persuade them to go back (the chief whereof was, that they might marry again, if they staid in their own country ; which they were not likely to do, if they went with her) at length her importunity prevailed upon Orpah ; who with tears, taking leave of her mother-in-law, turned back to Moab.

But no persuasion would prevail upon Ruth ; who, with a steady resolution, persisted in her purpose of cleaving fast to her mother-in-law. And to stop her mother from pressing her any further upon that subject, she said unto her, ‘ Intreat me not to leave thee : for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou dost rest (or settle) I will rest : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried : God forbid that any thing but death should part thee and me.’

When Naomi perceived that her daughter Ruth was stedfastly bent to go with her, and had also a purpose to cleave unto the God of Israel, she forbore pressing her further : and on they two travelled together, till they came to Bethlehem.

When they were come thither, where Naomi with her husband Elimelech had formerly lived in good fashion as persons of note, her return was generally taken notice of : and her old neighbours remembering her, though she had been absent so many years, came to welcome her home, and congratulate her return.

But when she heard them mention her name, Naomi, which signifies beautiful or pleasant, she cried out in the sense of her affliction, 'O call me not Naomi: call me Mara, which signifies bitter, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full; having an husband and two sons: but the Lord hath brought me home again empty; having neither husband nor son.'

It was in the beginning of barley-harvest, which usually was in their first month, when Naomi returned to Bethlehem. And Ruth the Moabitess, though poor, yet industrious, and willing to get something towards a livelihood, desired Naomi to let her go into the field, to lease or glean ears of corn, where they would suffer her. Her mother consenting, she went; and happened to light into a field belonging to one Boaz, a very wealthy man, of the family of Elimelech, and near of kin to him, and there she gleaned after the reapers, Ruth. ii.*

She had not long been there, ere Boaz himself came into the field, to look after his workmen. And having saluted them, not with some airy jest, frothy flout, or sharp taunt, as too many now a-days are apt to do, but, in a very solemn and religious manner, which they, in like sort, returned to him; he took notice of Ruth, and asked his bailiff whose damsel she was; he told him she was the Moabitish damsel that accompanied Naomi when she came back out of the country of Moab; and that she had asked leave to glean after the reapers. Whereupon Boaz, directing his speech particularly to her, encouraged her to continue leasing in his fields, and not go any where else, but keep with his maidens, into what field soever they went, and to drink with his servants, when she was a-thirst; letting her know he had charged his servants that they should not molest her.

Poor Ruth, overcome with this unexpected kindness, bowed herself before him; and could not but express the thankful sense she had of his courtesy, in that he would take so much notice of her, who was a stranger,

But Boaz let her know that he had received a full account of her, and of her kind and handsome carriage towards her mother-in-law, since the death of her husband; how affectionately she had claved to her mother-in-law, and leaving her own father and mother, and the land of her nativity, was come unto a people whom she had no knowledge of before; and that out of a pious design to be under the protection and care of the God of Israel; whom therefore he solemnly besought to recompense her work, and give her a full reward.

When meal-time came, Boaz invited her to come and eat with his reapers; and he gave her of his provisions more than she could eat. And when she went again to leasing, he ordered his servants not only to let her glean among the sheaves without reproof, but to let fall also some handfuls of corn on purpose, to make her leasing the better. Thus she gleaned in the fields until evening; and when she had beaten out her corn, she had got about an ephah of barley, which, according to Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, lib. 6, c. 9, is half a bushel and a pottle.

This she carried home to her mother Naomi; who rejoicing to see she had sped so well, asked her where she had gleaned that day. And when she understood the man that had been so kind to her was Boaz, she told her daughter he was of kin to them, one of their near kinsmen; and wished the blessing of God upon him, for that he had not left off his kindness, either to them who were still living, or to the memory of their husbands who were dead.

Thus Ruth, with Boaz's leave, keeping near unto his maidens, went on gleaning in his fields, until both barley and wheat-harvest was over; yet dwelt still with her mother-in-law Naomi.

But when harvest was ended, Naomi, studious how she might recompense the affectionate kindness of her daughter-in-law to her, and knowing by experience the comforts of a married life, began to project how she might engage Boaz to marry Ruth, to whom she

reckoned she of right belonged, according to the law of God, for raising up the name of a deceased brother, Ruth. iii.

Wherefore having before acquainted Ruth that Boaz was her near kinsman, and informed her what the law of Moses required in that case, she advised her to wash and anoint herself, which in those hot sweating countries, and in her employment, was not unneedful, and putting on her best clothes, go down to Boaz's barn, where he was winnowing his barley ; but by no means let it be known she was there, until he had supped and was gone to bed.

However Ruth, resolving to follow her mother's direction, went down to the barn, and placing herself where unseen she could see, she observed that Boaz, after he had eaten and drank, and his heart was merry, went and laid himself down at the end of the heap of corn : then waiting a while, till he was got to sleep, she came softly, and lifting up the clothes, undiscovered, laid herself down (as modestly as the case would admit) at his feet.

About midnight he waking, and feeling somebody at his feet, was frightened ; and catching hold, perceived it was a woman : wherefore he called out, ' Who art thou ? ' To which she answered, ' I am Ruth, thine handmaid. Spread therefore thy skirt (or wing) over thine handmaid ; for thou art a near kinsman.' Which was in effect as if she had said, Take me to wife as the law directs. For the phrase of spreading the skirt or wing over one, imports a taking such an one into protection. And because it is a part of an husband to protect and defend his wife from injuries, therefore to spread a wing or skirt over one, is used for a periphrasis of marriage.

Boaz, from the account he had received concerning Ruth, must needs know, both that her husband Mahlon was near of kin to him, and what the law required in in that case. But being himself pretty far in years, and Ruth a fair young dame, he might question, perhaps, whether if he should have made the offer, she

would have accepted of an old man. But now that she made the first motion, he was so far from rejecting her on the score of forwardness, that he commended her for it ; saying, ‘ Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter. For thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning ; inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.’

He took it (it seems) for a token of singular kindness to her former husband, as well as of devotion to the religion she was now converted to, that she would choose to marry her husband’s kinsman ; thereby to keep up her deceased husband’s name and family, in observance to the law of God, though that kinsman was old, in comparison of her who was young, rather than to please her eye with some young spruce fellow. And therefore he bid her assure herself, he would not fail to answer her desire, and his duty : which he had the greater inducement to, because she had the general reputation of a virtuous woman amongst all the people in the city.

Yet withall he told her, that although he was indeed a near kinsman, yet there was another nearer ; to whom he must be just, in giving him the preference, which was his right. But that he would speak with him about it next morning ; and then if that kinsman would do the duty of a kinsman to her (that is, marry her) he might : otherwise he himself would assuredly do it : and therefore he bid her lie still till morning.

She did so : yet got up before it was light, that she might get off undiscovered. For both he and she had a great regard to their reputation, and the honour of their religious profession. And therefore he had desired her to take care that it might not be known a woman had come into that place where he lay.

But before he let her go, he bid her come and hold up her apron or veil, and he put six measures of barley into it, that she might not go empty to her mother-in-law.

Thus laden, she returned to Naomi, and gave her an account of the whole proceeding. Which, when

Naomi had heard, she said to Ruth, 'Be still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be at rest, until he has finished the thing this day,' Ruth iv.

And so it proved. For in the morning Boaz came up to the gate of Bethlehem; and sitting down there, soon saw that kinsman whom he had spoken of to Ruth, coming by. Wherefore calling him to him, he desired him to sit down by him: which he did. Then taking ten other men, of the elders of the city, whom also he desired to sit down by them, he before them acquainted that other kinsman, that Naomi, who was come back out of the country of Moab, had a parcel of land to sell, which had been their brother Elimelech's; whereof he gave him this public notice, that he might redeem it, if he pleased: the right of redemption belonging in the first place, to him; but inasmuch as there was none else to redeem it but they too, he willed him to declare himself, that he might consider what he had to do, in case the other refused it.

That other kinsman presently answered, 'I will redeem it.' But when Boaz told him, that at the same time when he redeemed the land, he must also take Ruth the Moabitess to be his wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance; that other kinsman, changing his note, said, 'I cannot redeem it (on those terms) for myself; lest I destroy my own inheritance. Therefore, said he to Boaz, redeem thou my right to thyself: for (if that be the condition) I cannot redeem it.'

The reason thereof seems to be, that forasmuch as by the law, Deut. xxv. 6, the first-born of such a marriage was to bear the name of the woman's former husband that was dead, to keep up his name in Israel; if that kinsman had married Ruth, and should have had but one son only by her, that son not being to bear his name, but the name of her former husband, he himself should have had no son to keep up his own name in Israel: and so his inheritance might have

been lost from his name, by passing into another name and family : which he was not willing to hazard.

But Boaz was content to run that venture. And the manner or custom of Israel then being to confirm bargains, sales, exchanges, and alienations, by the ceremony of plucking off the shoe of him that did relinquish, or transfer his right ; the kinsman, as a token that he passed his right of redemption to Boaz, put off his shoe (or, as some think, suffered Ruth to pluck it off, according to Deut. xxv. 9) whereupon Boaz said to the elders, and to all the people that were present, ' Ye are my witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess have I purchased, said he, to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance ; that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren : ye, I say, are my witnesses this day.' Whereupon all the people that were in the gate (the place of concourse and public passage) and the elders of the city, answered, ' We are witnesses.'

Nor were they witnesses only, but well-wishers also : for they added, ' The Lord make the woman which is come into thine house, like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel. And do thou, Boaz, worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem ;' that is, prosper and increase thy substance, that thy name may be noted all over the city. ' And may thy house be like the house of Pharez (whom Tamar bare unto Judah) of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.' By which reference to Pharez (the issue of that incestuous congress) respect probably was had to the signification of his name, which speaks a breaking forth : whereby they wish, that the offspring of Boaz by Ruth may be numerous : and may break forth, and spread themselves far and wide in Israel.

Thus Boaz took Ruth to be his wife, without either ring or priest ; and when he went in unto her, the

Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son ; which good old Naomi took and nursed, and the women her neighbours named it Obed, which signifies a servant ; perhaps to intimate, that he should in time be serviceable and helpful to his grandmother and mother.

This Obed was the father of Jesse, and grandfather of king David ; of whom, according to the flesh, came our Lord Jesus Christ, who, as he was appointed to be the common Saviour of mankind, so he condescended to come through Pharez, begotten in incest, and through Ruth the Moabitess, that all, of all sorts, might lay claim unto him, and to the common salvation obtained by him for all.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF RUTH.

NOW FOLLOWS THE REST OF

THE

Book of Judges.

WE observed before, that this story of Ruth is held to have fallen within the time of those forty years of rest, which Israel is said to have had under the rule of Deborah and Barak. To which now looking back, we find, that after they were dead, the children of Israel, grown through peace and plenty wanton, did evil again in the sight of the Lord: by which afresh provoked, he subjected them to the power of Midian, to be chastised for seven years.

Though this bondage was for a shorter time than the former, yet it was very sharp upon them. So that the children of Israel were obliged to betake themselves to dens in the mountains, and caves in the earth, and to strong holds: and yet even so, could not secure themselves: for they were forced to come out to sow the land, that they might have sustenance. But when they had sown, and the corn was come up, then came the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the people of the east, not only for forage, but bringing with them their tents and their cattle, in very great numbers, they encamped against Israel, until they had destroyed all the crop and increase of the earth; leaving the poor Israelites neither corn nor cattle to live upon, but sweeping all away. And thus they did from year to year, till Israel was thereby so greatly impoverished, that in the sense of their misery they cried unto the Lord for help.

But before the Lord would give them ease, he sent a prophet unto them: of whom we have neither the name, nor any further account, but that he said unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drove them out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I am the Lord your God, fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice,' Judg. vi.

By this expostulation he brought them to a sense of their transgression, and of the justness of the punishment they lay under; that they might be the more truly humbled under his hand, and the fitter for deliverance: which he intended to work for them by Gideon, the son of Joash the Abiezrite.

Very busy was Gideon in threshing wheat, that he might hide it from the Midianites, little thinking that he must so suddenly exchange his flail for a sword, when the angel of the Lord appearing to him, said, 'The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.'

This unexpected salutation startled Gideon. Who thereupon taking occasion to bemoan the condition of his people, made answer, 'Oh, my lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his miracles, which our forefathers have told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? but now, alas! the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites: and dost thou say, 'The Lord is with me?''*

The Lord then looking upon him with a strengthening eye, said, 'Go in this thy might; and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?'

But poor Gideon, looking at his own weakness, and not yet knowing who it was that spake to him, replied, 'Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel (or what

capacity am I in to save Israel); seeing my family is but poor in the tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in the family?' The Lord then, to encourage him, said, 'Surely, I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites, though they are so numerous, with as much ease as if they were but one man.'

This raised Gideon's attention higher, to consider who it was that talked with him. Whereupon he said, 'If now I have found favour in thy sight, vouchsafe to shew me a sign, whereby I may know that it is thou, the Lord, that talkest with me. Wherefore, depart not hence, I pray thee, till I come again, and bring forth my present (or meat offering) and set it before thee.'

The angel promising to tarry till he came, Gideon went in, and making ready a kid, and some unleavened cakes, brought them forth, and presented them before him under the oak where he sat. And having, by the angel's directions, laid the flesh and the cakes upon the rock, and poured out the broth, the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the cakes: whereupon fire rose up out of the rock, and consumed them; and then the angel disappeared. Gideon, by this perceiving that it was an angel of the Lord, cried out, 'Alas! O Lord God: for I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face;' which was held a fatal thing. But the Lord, to confirm and comfort him, said, 'Peace be unto thee: fear not, thou shalt not die.' Gideon hereupon, in thankful remembrance of the Lord's goodness to him, built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-Shalom; that is, The Lord of peace, or the Lord send peace.

Hitherto the Lord had appeared to Gideon in such a manner as was perceptible to his outward senses, to confirm and strengthen him for the work he had to employ him in; which now he began to put him upon. For the same night the Lord commanded him to throw down the altar of Baal, which in those corrupt times

had been set up ; and to ' cut down the grove that was by it ; and to build an altar to the Lord his God upon the top of the rock ; and take his father's second bullock, which was seven years old, and offer it for a burnt sacrifice, with the wood of the grove which he was to cut down.'

This bullock is thought to be called the second, from the stall it stood and was fed in ; which was the second in order of place. And being as many years old as their subjection to Midian was, the destroying this bullock might in some sort prefigure the breaking the Midianitish yoke from off the neck of Israel, by Gideon ; whose name sounds a breaker or destroyer.

Gideon, resolving to obey God, began to cast in his mind which way he might accomplish the work. And doubting he should meet with opposition or hindrance, if he should attempt to do it in the day time ; he concluded to do it in the night : and accordingly taking ten men of his servants to assist him, he performed it fully, as the Lord had directed him.

But what a stir was there in the morning among the men of the city, when, as soon as they were up, they found the altar of Baal cast down, the grove cut down that was by it, and a new altar built, and the choice bullock offered upon it ! They hunt about, sift, and examine, to find out the author of this bold action : and at length fastening it upon Gideon, they require his father Joash to bring him forth that they may put him to death for it.

Joash being a man of power amongst his people, and well satisfied with what his son had done, stood up boldly in his defence ; and expostulating the matter closely with his fellow citizens, those Baalitish bigots, ' Will ye, said he, plead for Baal ? Will ye serve him ? Ye talk of putting my son to death for throwing down his altar : but I say, he that will plead for Baal let him be put to death, while it is yet morning. If he be a god, let him plead for himself against him that has thrown down his altar.' And upon this occasion, he

called his son Gideon, Jerub-baal : as much as to say, let Baal avenge ; or let the idol overcome.

Though Joash thus answered the men of his city, and stopped their mouths ; yet the matter did not stop there. The Midianites and the Amalekites, with the other eastern people, gathering themselves together, came over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel : not only as at other times to ravage the country ; but probably to avenge the injury they conceived done to Baal, the general god of the heathen.

Now did the Lord more eminently appear : for the spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon ; it so came upon him as to cover him. And he, in the strength thereof, blowing a trumpet, all those of his family, the Abiezrites, came in quickly to him. Then sending messengers throughout the tribe of Manasseh, and to the tribes of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, they flocked in so fast unto him, that in a little time he had a pretty army of two and thirty thousand men. But this was but an handful, in comparison of the great host of the enemies ; which consisted of one hundred and thirty and five thousand men.

Gideon therefore, seeing the disparity of their forces, and having never before been exercised in this manner, besought the Lord to give him a sign or token, for a confirmation to him and his men, that he would save Israel by his hand.

The sign he proposed was, that he laying a fleece of wool in the floor, the dew should be upon the fleece only, and the earth round about should be dry. The Lord condescended : and Gideon, having laid down his fleece over night, found the ground about it dry in the morning, and the fleece so full of dew, that he wrung a bowl full of water out of it.

To encourage and hearten his men, and remove out of their minds, all suspicion of art or contrivance, Gideon asked leave of God, that he might make trial by his fleece once more, inverting the order ; so that the token of good success now should be, that the fleece should be dry, and the ground dewy. To which the

Lord graciously yielded ; and the fleece being laid the next night again, was found dry in the morning, but the ground round about it had dew upon it.

Thus by a two-fold miracle confirmed, Gideon resolved to give battle to the Midianites ; and in order thereunto drew up his army beside the well of Harod, having the enemy on the north side of him, in the valley, by the hill of Moreh, Judg. vii.

But as Gideon before thought his forces too few, God now thought them too many, and that, if he delivered the Midianites into their hands (as he intended to do) Israel might be apt to vaunt themselves against him, and attribute their deliverance to their own strength. Therefore he ordered Gideon to make proclamation throughout the camp, that whosoever was afraid, should have liberty to depart and return home. And upon that, there marched off two and twenty thousand at once : so that Gideon had but ten thousand men left with him. And yet the Lord held these too many still. For he was resolved now to order the matter so, that Israel's deliverance should evidently appear to be wholly of the Lord, not of man.

Therefore he bid Gideon bring the soldiers down unto the water. And as Gideon had before asked sign upon sign, he would now, without asking, give him a sign whereby he should distinguish and know which of them should go with him, and which should not. They that took up water in their hand, and lapped it like a dog, should go with him ; but they that kneeled down to drink should be disbanded.

When it came to the trial, nine thousand and seven hundred of the ten thousand kneeled down to drink : so that Gideon had but three hundred left to go with him. And yet by those three hundred men that lapped, the Lord told him he would save Israel, and deliver the Midianites into his hand. Wherefore, at the Lord's command, he dismissed all the rest of the people ; only keeping so many of their trumpets, that each of his three hundred men might have one for himself.

Now had Gideon need of strong faith to his weak forces: for the same night the Lord gave him the word of command, to go and fall on; telling him he had delivered the Midianites into his hand. Yet considering the greatness and difficulty of the enterprize, he graciously added; ‘But if thou fear to go down, go thou first, with Phurah thy servant; that by hearing what they say among themselves, thy hands may be strengthened, and thou be encouraged to go down with thy men.’

Gideon, glad of this liberty, taking only his servant with him, went softly down, in the covert of the evening, till he came to the utmost ranks of the enemy’s army; which lay along in the valley, like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels without number.

Long he had not stood there, ere he heard one of the enemy’s soldiers telling his dream to his comrade; and thus he began it: ‘Behold, said he, I dreamed a dream; and lo, a cake of barley-bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and coming against a tent smote it, that it fell and overturned it, that the tent lay along.’ His comrade presently undertaking to expound the dream, told him, ‘This barley-cake is nothing else, save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.’

When Gideon had heard this dream, with the interpretation thereof, he had enough. Wherefore bowing himself in thankfulness to God, his next care was, how to get back, as he came thither, undiscovered. Which having done, he cheerfully said to his men, ‘Arise: for the Lord hath delivered the host of Midian into your hand.’

Then dividing his three hundred men into three companies, and giving every man a trumpet in one hand, and a pitcher with a burning lamp in it, in the other hand; he charged them to follow him, and observing his motion, do just as they should see him do.

All things now disposed in order, Gideon set forward with one hundred men at his heels; the other

two companies advancing also, and placing themselves on each side of the host: and when Gideon was come to the outside of the camp, he with his company blew their trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands. Which the other two companies observing, they forthwith blew their trumpets also, and brake their pitchers; and with terrible shouts cried out, 'The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon:' for that was the word.

It was now the beginning of the middle watch, which, dividing the night, from six to six, into four watches, as most do, should answer ten at night with us. But that seems early, considering how much time must be spent, after Gideon had order to set forward, in his going to the camp; staying there to hear the dream with its interpretation: returning back again, disposing his men, and giving the necessary orders for the assault. Drusius, on the place, dividing the night into three watches only, supposes this to be called the middle watch, as being the middlemost of three. Such a division running the middle watch an hour further, makes the beginning of it answer our eleven at night.

Whichsoever it was, likely it is that the Midianitish host were in their tents, and settled to rest, when their quarters were beaten up with this unexpected alarm; which must needs be not only very surprising, but exceeding terrible to them.

The sudden sounding of so many warlike trumpets, the crashing noise of so many pitchers dashed in pieces all in a moment, the dazzling sight of so many flaming tapers, flashing about in a dark night, might well strike them with both amazement and terror.

Nor was it a slight or common policy in Gideon, to put a trumpet in every man's hand; by which the Midianites might well suppose, according to the rules of military order, the Israelitish army to be very great, when they heard so many trumpets sounding together: and those so disposed, on each side of the camp that the Midianites might apprehend they were surrounded and enclosed.

But above all, the Lord struck the Midianites with fear, and set them altogether by the ears amongst themselves throughout the host: so that rising up in a fright, they ran and fled, making an horrible outcry, and thrust their swords through one another.

Which disorder being observed, the men of Israel gathered together out of Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites: for they who before were afraid to fight, were now bold to pursue a flying enemy.

Gideon also sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim, inviting the Ephraimites to come down against the Midianites, and possess themselves of the fords, that they might take them in their flight over Jordan; which the Ephraimites doing, they took Oreb and Zeeb, two princes of the Midianites, and having slain them, followed the pursuit.

Gideon meanwhile, with his three hundred men, following hard upon the chace, came weary and faint to Succoth; where making a little halt, he entreated the men of Succoth to give his soldiers some loaves of bread, to refresh them, because they were hasting in pursuit after Zebah and Zalmunna, two of the kings of Midjan, who with about fifteen thousand men were fled to Karkor. But the princes of Succoth, considering how strong the Midianitish kings were in comparison of Gideon, they being fifteen thousand to his three hundred tired men, not only refused to refresh his soldiers, but in derision asked him, if the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna were now in his hands, that they should relieve his army, Judg. viii.

This insult Gideon resented so much, that he told them, 'When the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, then will I tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briars.'

Then marching a little further to Penuel, he made the like request to the men of that place, and received from them the same answer that he had at Succoth. Whereupon he told the men of Penuel, 'When I come again, in peace, I will break down this tower.'

Hopeless now of any relief, he was obliged to lead on his men, faint and weary as they were, towards Karkor; where the two Midianitish kings, with their rallied hosts, lay, as they thought, secure.

But he falling suddenly and briskly upon them, smote and discomfited the whole host. And pursuing the two kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, who fled, he took them, and brought them back with him to Succoth.

But before he entered the town, having caught a young man of the place, he made him describe unto him the princes of Succoth; who were threescore and seventeen men. Then entering the city, and calling the princes before him, he shewed them Zebah and Zalmunna, his prisoners, with whom they before had upbraided him; and taking the elders of the city, he chastised them with thorns and briars, as he had before threatened to do; and thereby taught the men of Succoth to behave themselves better for the future. Nor did he spare Penuel; but threw down the tower, and slew the chief men (or governors) of the city.

Then turning to Zebah and Zalmunna, he asked them what manner of men they were whom they had slain at Tabor; and they telling him they were like him, each of them representing the child of a king, he replied, 'They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother;' whose lives, if they had saved, he would (he told them) have saved theirs: but now, since they had killed his brethren, they must expect no mercy. Therefore he bid his eldest son Jether, rise up and slay them: but he, being but a youth, was somewhat timorous, and not forward to draw his sword. Which Zebah and Zalmunna observing, and thinking it better (seeing there was no hopes of life) to be dispatched quickly by a strong and bold hand, than to be long a hacking to death by a feeble and fearful hand, desired Gideon to fall upon them himself; 'for as is the man, said they, so is his strength.' Whereupon Gideon arose and slew them, and took the ornaments, or trappings, from off their camels' necks.

The men of Ephraim, when they had taken and slain Oreb and Zeeb, two princes of Midian, brought their heads to Gideon, on the other side Jordan, to let him see what service they had done; and withall, began to quarrel with him for his not calling them at the first to the battle. But he, by magnifying their service and success in what they had done upon the pursuit, and preferring their performances to his own, wisely pacified them, and so prevented further mischief.

The strength of Midian thus broken by the slaughter and destruction of their whole host, consisting of an hundred thirty and five thousand men, a time of peace and tranquillity ensued to Israel for forty years together. Which period yet is by many reckoned to commence from the end of the forty years peace procured by Deborah and Barak.

And now so full of sense were the men of Israel of Gideon's merit, in having wrought so great a deliverance from them, that they offered to settle the government on Gideon, and make it hereditary to his family. Which great temptation Gideon most generously resisted, saying, 'I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: but the Lord shall rule over you. Yet to let you see, said he, that I do not slight your kindness, I will request one thing of you; and that is, that ye will every one give me the ear-rings of his prey.' They readily answered, 'We will willingly give them.' And forthwith spreading a garment, they cast in every man the ear-rings of his prey: which being of gold (as being taken from the Ishmaelites) they came by weight to one thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold; besides divers other sorts of ornaments, and rich raiment, with the chains that were upon the camels' necks; all which they threw in, over and above what was asked.

If the shekel of gold was in value fifteen shillings of English money, as Godwyn computes it (Moses and Aaron, l. 6, c. 9) these one thousand seven hun-

dred shekels would come to one thousand two hundred seventy and five pounds.

Of this gold Gideon made an ephod, and put it in his city Ophrah, with no other intention, as is generally concluded, but that it might be a monument of the victory obtained by Israel over the Midianites. But it proved a snare to the house of Gideon; and indeed to the whole house of Israel. For after Gideon was dead, who lived to a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in his city Ophrah, all Israel went a whoring after this ephod, and turned again after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god; which was the idol of the Sechemites, amongst whom he had an house or temple.

Thus the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerub-baal, that is, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.*

Their ingratitude to God, the author of their deliverance, is seen in their forsaking the Lord, and serving strange gods. Their ingratitude to Gideon, the instrument of their deliverance, is evinced by their killing his sons, which the sequel of the story relates.

For Gideon, by many wives, had threescore and ten sons; and by a concubine, he had one son, whom he named Abimelech. Now though Gideon had refused the government of Israel, both for himself and for his sons; yet when he was dead, this bastard Abimelech, being a forward youth, betook himself to his mother's kindred at Shechem; and suggesting to them that all his seventy brethren would usurp the government over them, wished them to consider, which would be better for them, that seventy persons should reign over them, or but one: and withall put them in mind, that he was their bone and their flesh, Judg. ix.

His mother's kindred taking this in, as a project that promised preferment to them, slyly insinuated it to the men of Shechem; who, for the same reason

falling in with it also, contrived how to advance Abimelech. And because money is said to answer all things, they stuck not to give him some of their sacred treasure out of the house of their god, Baal-berith; wherewith he hired vain and light persons, dissolute fellows, to attend him. And with these ruffians speeding to his father's house at Ophrah, he seized on his brethren, the sons of Jerub-baal, who were seventy in number, and slew them all upon one stone; except the youngest, whose name was Jotham, and who escaped that slaughter by hiding himself.

The Shechemites, now holding themselves safe from any danger or opposition from Gideon's house, grew bolder, and gathering themselves together, with all the forces of Millo (or the fortress) set up Abimelech for their king. Which when young Jotham understood, he went to the top of Mount Gerizim, where he might be both well seen and heard, and yet be out of their reach; and from thence, with a loud voice calling unto the Shechemites, he said, 'Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem; that God may hearken unto you.' By which solemn address having engaged their attention, he delivered his mind to them, in this witty and significant apologue :*

The trees, said he, went forth to anoint a king over them; and the first choice they made was of the olive, to which they offered the crown, saying, Reign over us. But the olive refused it, saying, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Upon this refusal of the olive, they tendered the government to the fig-tree. But the fig-tree, not willing to part with its sweetness and good fruit, declined it also.

Thereupon they present it to the vine. But the vine, preferring its delicious wine to the gaudy trouble of government, chose to continue its private and quiet estate.

Hitherto the trees had cast their choice upon the richest and most reputable of their company: but hav-

ing thus been the third time repulsed, they resolved now to make the offer, where in all likelihood it would not be rejected: and therefore, with one consent, they pitched upon the bramble, or thistle; saying, 'Come thou, and reign over us.'

The bramble, without any compliment or ceremony, readily accepted the offer; but wished them to be in earnest, letting them know what otherwise they must trust to. 'If in truth, said he, ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow; but if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

By which apt parable, having represented to the Shechemites how his father Jerub-baal, when the men (not of Shechem only, but) of Israel, had offered to settle the government upon him and his posterity in tail, did, like the olive, fig, and vine, bravely refuse it; and that they had now cast it upon one, as much inferior in virtue, worth, and honour, to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to the olive, fig-tree, or vine; he expostulated the injury done to his family, and thus laid their ingratitude before them:

'Now therefore, said he, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king; and if ye have dealt well with Jerub-baal and his house, according to what he deserved of you (for my father fought for you, and adventured his life to the utmost, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian; and yet, notwithstanding all that, ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, so that of seventy persons, I only, by providence, have escaped you; and ye have made Abimelech, the son of his hand-maid, king over the men of Shechem; not for his virtue, but because he is your brother). If, I say, ye have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerub-baal, and with his house this day; then rejoice in Abimelech, and let him rejoice in you. But if not, then let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come also out of the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.'

When Jotham had thus delivered himself, knowing there could be no safety for him any where within Abimelech's reach, he fled to Beer: which some guess to be a village in the tribe of Simeon. But if Abimelech was king over Israel at large (as the text intimates, ver. 22) Jotham could hardly have been safe, if known to be in any of the tribes.

But wherever Jotham's sanctuary was, it was not long ere the curse he had denounced upon Abimelech and the Shechemites, brake forth indeed between them as a devouring fire.

For when Abimelech had reigned three years, God sent an evil spirit between him and the men of Shechem, by which they were stirred up to deal treacherously with him; and he roughly with them. And this was brought to pass, that the cruelty done to the sons of Jerub-baal might be avenged, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech, their brother, that slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of them. Which shews that Jotham did not speak at random.

At first the Shechemites wrought privily against Abimelech, appointing some to lie in wait for him on the top of the mountains, where he used to resort; that they might kill, or at least seize on him. But this design being discovered to Abimelech, he escaped them. Whereupon they turning highwaymen, robbed all passengers.

This did not answer the Shechemites' end. Wherefore they entertained in their service one Gaal, the son of Ebed, who came to Shechem with a band of men that were his brethren or kindred, and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. And thinking themselves safe under his conduct, they went out boldly into the fields to gather and press their grapes. And making songs in praise of Gaal, they went into the house of their god; where they did eat and drink, and curse Abimelech.

Puffed up with this popular breath, Gaal began to look and talk big, speaking contemptibly not only of

Abimelech, but of Jerub-baal also, and wishing the people were wholly at his command that he might remove Abimelech. And turning his speech (by a figure called apostrophe) to Abimelech, as if he had been present, he foolishly cried out, 'Increase thine army, and come forth.'

Zebul was governor of Shechem at that time for Abimelech, who having heard Gaal's insolent speeches, and being thoroughly warmed therewith, sent messengers privately to Abimelech, who then dwelt at Arumah, otherwise called Tormah, and acquainted him that Gaal, with his brethren, being come to Shechem, began to fortify the city against him. Wherefore he advised him to come with his forces by night, and lie in wait in the fields; and early in the morning, when Gaal and his followers should come out, set upon them and take the city.

Abimelech, following Zebul's counsel, came forward with his men by night; and disposed them in four companies, at such a distance from the city, that they might not be discerned. And when Gaal went out to the city-gate, early in the morning, Abimelech and his men, being risen up from lying in wait, were coming down towards the city. Gaal therefore seeing them move at a distance, told Zebul the governor, that there came people down from the top of the mountains. Zebul understood it well enough; yet partly to amuse Gaal, and partly to deride him, answered, 'Thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as if they were men.' Gaal would not be so put off: but looking more earnestly, shewed Zebul where the people came down; some in one company, and some in another. Zebul seeing them now so near, that there was no danger in owning it, laughed Gaal to scorn; asking him in derision, 'Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? Is not this the people that thou hast despised? Go out, I pray thee now, and fight with them.' Gaal having no other remedy, led out the men of Shechem to fight with Abimelech; but was soon overthrown, put to

flight, and chased to the gate: but Zebul would not suffer him nor his men to enter Shechem again.

On the morrow, others of the city going forth into the fields, Abimelech falling on them, slew them. And when he had fought all day against the city, he at length took it: and having slain the people that were in it, he beat down the city: and to express his detestation of it, he sowed it with salt.

They who were in the tower of Shechem, seeing the city thus destroyed, thought themselves hardly safe there; and therefore went into a strong hold or fortress belonging to the house of their god, Berith. Which when Abimelech understood, he took an axe in his hand, and bidding all the people that were with him follow him, and do as they saw him do, he went up to Mount Zalmon, where grew a grove of trees; and cutting down a bough, took it on his shoulder, and brought it down to the hold. The rest of the people following his direction and example, brought every one his bough, and laying them about the hold, set it on fire: by which means all the people that were in it, being about a thousand men and women, were destroyed.

Lifted up with success, Abimelech went to another city, called Thebez; against which he encamped, and took it. But there being a strong tower within the city, the people, both men and women, fled generally thither; and shutting themselves in, got them up to the top of the tower.

Abimelech, pursuing his own destruction, came unto the tower, and fought against it: but pressing hard unto the door of the tower to have set it on fire, a woman from above cast down a piece of a millstone upon his head, which brake his skull. He feeling himself mortally wounded, called hastily to his armour-bearer, and said, 'Draw thy sword and slay me; that men say not of me, a woman slew him:' whereupon his armour-bearer thrust him through, that he died. And when his army saw that he was dead, they dispersed themselves.*

Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did to his father, in slaying his brethren, upon his own head. And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads also. And upon them both came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerub-baal, or Gideon.

This Abimelech, no better than he was, is reckoned among the Judges;* and to have ruled Israel three years. After whose death, Tola, a man of Issachar, arose to defend Israel, and he judged Israel three and twenty years; and yet nothing is recorded that he did in that time: to whom succeeded Jair, a Gileadite, who judged Israel two and twenty years. And all the account we have of him is, that he had thirty sons, who rode upon thirty ass-colts, to distinguish them from the common people; and each of them had a city or village to himself, which were called the villages of air, Judg. x.†

In so long a time since Gideon's death great corruptions were crept in; and the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord: for they served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the Lord, and served not him.

This highly provoked the Lord, so that his anger was hot against Israel; and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and of the children of Ammon, who vexed and oppressed them eighteen years, even all the children of Israel that were on the other side of Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. And in the last year, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim: so that Israel was sore distressed.

In this distress the children of Israel crying unto the Lord, said, 'We have sinned against thee, both in that we have forsaken thee, our God, and also served Baalim.'

The Lord hereupon took occasion to enter into a close expostulation with Israel, recounting to them the many deliverances he had given them : ‘ Yet, said he, ye have forsaken me, and served other gods.... Wherefore I will deliver you no more,’ that is, unless ye put away your strange gods, and turn to me with unfeigned repentance. . And to make them the more sensible of their folly, as well as wickedness, in forsaking him who had so often helped them, and in falling down to such senseless stocks, as could help neither them nor themselves, he bid them ‘ Go cry to the gods which ye have chosen, and let them, said he, deliver you in the time of your tribulation.’

This sharp reproof pierced the poor Israelites to the heart ; so that humbling themselves before the Lord, they said again, ‘ We have sinned : do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee ; only deliver us, we pray thee, this day.’ Neither did they make confession only in words, but in practice reformed : for they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord. Whereupon he commiserated the condition of his people, and appointed them means to effect their deliverance.

There was in that half tribe of Manasseh, which settled on the other side Jordan, a man of note amongst his people, whose name was Gilead, of the posterity of that Gilead, the son of Machir, unto whom Moses gave the city of Gilead, Numb. xxxii. 4 ; from whence that family was called Gileadites, Judg. xii.

This Gilead had divers sons by his wife ; but he had one son by an harlot, whom he named Jephthah. And when his lawful sons were grown up, they thrust out Jephthah ; telling him, he should have no inheritance among them, not being born in lawful matrimony. Whereupon Jephthah flying from his brethren, went and dwelt in the land of Tob, which signifies goodness, as Jephthah signifies opening ; and being a bold young man, a company of vain fellows flocked to him, and went along with him.

After some time the children of Ammon making war against Israel, the elders of Gilead wanting a general; and knowing Jephthah to be a man of great valour, went to him at Tob; and offering him the command of their army, desired him to come and be captain-general of their forces, that under his conduct they might fight with Ammon.

Jephthah surprised with this sudden change, asked them, 'Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come to me now, when ye are in distress?'

They plainly acknowledging that it was their distress that had moved them to come to him, said, 'Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.'

But, said Jephthah, willing to be on sure terms, If ye bring me home again to fight for you, against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head, or chief ruler afterwards?

They solemnly engaging that he should, and calling God to witness upon it, Jephthah thereupon went with them; and the people made him head or captain over them; Jephthah repeating the covenant of agreement that was made between them before the Lord in Mizpeh.

The government being thus settled upon him, he forthwith sent messengers to the king of Ammon, to demand the reason why he was come to make war in his land. To which the Ammonitish king answered, that the land was his; that Israel when they came up out of Egypt, had taken it away from his people the Ammonites; that therefore he was come to demand and recover his right, unless Jephthah would restore it peaceably.

Jephthah hereupon, by messengers which he sent to him again, opened the whole matter to him from the beginning, that he might see his error; shewing him, that Israel took not the land in question from the

Ammonites; nor had indeed any thing to do with them. But that having in their travel from Egypt desired passage through the countries of Edom and Moab, and being denied by the king of each, they were forced to fetch a great compass, till they came to the land of the Amorites; of whom also they prayed passage. But Sihon the Amoritish king, not only opposed their passage, but with all his forces set upon them. Whereupon it coming to a pitched battle, the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon, and all his people, into the hand of Israel, and they smote them; by which means Israel came to possess all the land of the Amorites, even whatsoever Sihon was possessed of: and he having before taken from the king of Moab the land now in question, Numb. xxi, ver. 26, that fell with the rest by conquest from the Amorite to Israel.

Jephthah having thus shewed that Israel took nothing from Ammon or Moab, but from the Amorites, whom the Lord God of Israel had dispossessed before his people, thus reasons with the Ammonitish king: 'Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out before us, them will we possess.'

Then confirming Israel's title by a long prescription of about three hundred years peaceable enjoyment; he concluded thus: 'Wherefore I have not sinned against thee; but thou dost wrong me, in making war against me: the Lord, the judge, be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.'

The Ammonitish king not yielding to Jephthah's reasons, but persisting in his claim, the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, by which animated, he marched out against the children of Ammon, who were ready in arms to receive him.

But before he joined battle with them, he vowed a vow unto the Lord, saying, 'If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in

peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, 'or I will offer it up for a burnt offering.' So I read it, according to the margin, rather than 'and,' as it stands in the text, for reasons which shall be given by and by.

This vow thus made for good success, Jephthah joined battle with the Ammonites, and the Lord delivered them into his hands; so that he smote them with a very great slaughter, took twenty cities from them, and subdued them before the children of Israel.

After which, returning to his house at Mizpeh, who should be the first that came forth to meet him, but his own only daughter; who, to congratulate his victory and safe return, came out to him with music and dancing; and she was indeed his only child.

But when he saw her, he rent his clothes, and cried out, 'Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low; and thy coming (at this time) is a trouble to me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.'

'Well, my father, said the damsel, forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, the children of Ammon; if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth, only, added she, grant me this request, let me alone (leave me at liberty) two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity with my companions.' Which being granted her, she went, and at the end of the two months returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow: and she knew no man, that is, she never married. And it became a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly four days in a year to discourse with the daughter of Jephthah.

Jephthah has undergone much censure from many, and some of great name, for making this vow, which they call unlawful, and more for performing it; upon a supposition, that he did actually sacrifice his daughter, by offering her as a burnt offering upon the altar.

valuing fifteen pence, would amount to about three hundred forty-three pounds, and fifteen shillings.

So great a bait easily prevailed with the woman, to do her endeavour to betray Samson. Wherefore when she had him by herself, she said unto him, 'Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.' He, willing to put her by, without discovering the ground of his strength, told her, if they bound him with seven new withs, that had never been dried, then he should be weak, and as another man.

She forthwith imparting this to the lords of the Philistines, they brought her seven such withs, and she bound him with them. And then, having men lying in wait in the house ready to seize upon him, she said hastily to him, 'The Philistines be upon thee Samson.' At which word, he starting up, on a sudden brake the withs, as easily as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So that it was not yet known in what his strength lay.

Delilah, thus disappointed, charged him with having mocked her, and told her lies; and therefore desired him now to tell her truly, wherewith he might be bound. He put her by again, by telling her that if they bound him with new ropes, that had never been used, he should be weak and as other men. She tried, getting new ropes, and binding him therewith. But when she waked him on a sudden, by telling him the Philistines were upon him, he snapped the ropes from off his arms like a thread.

Then she complained to him again, that hitherto he had but mocked her, and deceived her by falsehoods: wherefore she intreated him to tell her now indeed, with what he might be bound. He again to shift her, that she might not discover wherein his strength lay, directed her to weave the seven locks of his head with a web (which word bespeaks it to be a weaver's house); she did so, fastening his hair, so platted together, with the pin of the loom: and then crying out 'The Phi-

Philistines be upon thee Samson;' he, leaping up out of his sleep, went away with the pin of the beam and the web hanging at his locks.

He was wont to tell her he loved her; with which she now upbraiding him, asked him, how he could say he loved her, seeing his heart was not with her. For, said she, thou hast deluded me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth; though thou madest me believe thou wouldest.

Thus pressing him daily with her importunities, and urging him till he was weary of his life, he at length opened his heart to her, and told her, there had never yet come a razor upon his head; for he had been a Nazarite unto God from his mother's womb, and that if he should be shaven his strength would go from him, and he should become weak like another man.

Now knew Delilah that she had obtained her end of him. Wherefore she sent for the lords of the Philistines to come to her this one time more: letting them know, he had now discovered the whole secret to her.

They hastened to her, with the money in their hands; and she, having lulled him to sleep in her lap, caused a man (whom she had provided for that purpose) to shave off the seven locks of his head. Which done, she began to afflict him; telling him, the Philistines were upon him. He thereupon, waking out of his sleep, said, 'I will go forth, as I used to do, and shake myself;' not witting that the Lord was departed from him, till he found his strength was gone.

The Philistines seeing him now really disabled, seized immediately on him; and to make sure of him, the first thing they did was to put out his eyes. Then bringing him down to Gaza, they bound him now in earnest with fetters of brass, and putting him into the prison-house (or bridewell) they there made him grind.

After some time the lords of the Philistines gathered their people together, to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. This Dagon, being the common god of the sea-coasts, had the form of a man from the naval upwards; and downwards of a

fish, from which the word is derived. And to him these lords of the Philistines ascribed the delivery of Samson into their hands. Nor they only, but the rest of the people also praising their god Dagon, said, 'Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy; the destroyer of our country, who slew many of us.'

When they had feasted awhile, and their hearts were merry, they said one to another, 'Call for Samson, that he may make us sport.' Whereupon Samson was brought forth out of the prison, and being set between two of the pillars which supported the house where they were, they made themselves sport with him.

At this solemnity were present, not only all the lords of the Philistines, but the house full of men and women. And because the house was not capacious enough to receive the company, about three thousand men and women had placed themselves upon the roof of the house, to behold the sport that was made with Samson.

By this time Samson's hair was somewhat grown again. And as it is probable his strength might begin to return, so it is not to be doubted that these indignities would raise in his spirit the highest indignation. Wherefore having persuaded the lad that led him, to set him so that he might feel the pillars whereon the house stood, on pretence of leaning upon them to rest him, he called in spirit unto the Lord, and said, 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.'

He then took hold of the two middle pillars, which bore up the house, one with his right hand and the other with his left hand, and bowing himself with all his might, that he might exert his utmost strength, he said, 'Let me die with the Philistines.' And with that word, removing those two pillars, the house fell down upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein; 'so that they which he slew at his death, were more than they which he slew in his life.'

This was the end of Samson, who is said to have judged Israel twenty years; and was rather indeed a

scourge to the Philistines, than a deliverer of the Israelites. Yet he may be said to have begun to deliver Israel; which is as much as the angel, before he was conceived, foretold he should do.

When his brethren heard of his death, they, with all the house of his father, came down and took him; and having brought him up, buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father.

THE END OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

THE

First Book of Samuel:

CONTAINING AN HISTORY OF SIXTY OR EIGHTY YEARS :
I SAY SIXTY OR EIGHTY ; BECAUSE THOUGH FORTY
YEARS BE ALLOTTED TO ELI, AND FORTY TO SAMUEL
AND SAUL, YET TWENTY OUT OF ELI'S FORTY ARE BY
MOST CHRONOLOGERS GIVEN TO SAMSON, WHOSE
STORY IS DELIVERED BEFORE.

AFTER the death of Samson, who is accounted the last of the extraordinary judges, the administration of the government, in the Israelitish commonwealth, seems to have devolved upon Eli, who was then the high priest ; unless we should rather say, it revolved or returned to Eli, as high priest, to whom, in the ordinary course of magistracy among the Israelites, it belonged during those twenty years wherein Samson is said to have judged Israel.

In this Eli's time was born the prophet Samuel, the son of Elkanah, a Levite descended from that Korah, who in Moses' time, for his rebellion in the wilderness, was swallowed up by the gaping earth, and all he had with him, Numb. xvi, except his sons, Numb. xxvi. 11 ; from the eldest of which, named Assir, the genealogy is drawn down to Samuel, in 1 Chron. vi, from ver. 22 to 28.

This Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, sons and daughters ; but Hannah, to her great grief, had none.

Once a year Elkanah went up out of his city to worship and sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh ; taking with him his two wives and children. And when he had made his offerings, he gave portions to Peninnah, and to all her children ; but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her best.

Watchful Peninnah, observing that, grew emulous ; and, to revenge herself, provoked and vexed Hannah, by upbraiding her with her barrenness. This so troubled poor Hannah, that she wept, and did not eat : which her kind husband taking notice of, asked her, ‘ Hannah, why weepest thou ? Why eatest thou not ? And why is thy heart grieved ? ’ And supposing the cause, added, ‘ Am not I better to thee than ten sons ? ’
1 Sam. i.*

Hannah, not returning answer, rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh ; and in the bitterness of her soul, poured forth her prayer unto the Lord with sore weeping. And she vowed a vow, saying, ‘ O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and will give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.’ That is, he should be a Nazarite, devoted to the Lord.

This Hannah spake in her heart, not uttering her voice, but only moving her lips. Which Eli the priest, who sat upon a seat by a post of the house of the Lord, where the ark then was kept, observing, and thinking she had been drunk, reproved her, saying, ‘ How long wilt thou be drunk ? Put away thy wine from thee.’

But Hannah mildly answered, ‘ No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit : I have drank neither wine, nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial ; for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken.’

Eli, now finding he had been under a mistake, turned his reproof into a blessing ; saying unto her, ‘ Go

in peace ; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition ; which thou hast asked of him.' She begging the continuance of his prayers for her, went cheerfully away.

Early next morning they arose, and having worshipped the Lord, they returned to their house at Ramah. And the Lord remembered her, so that she conceived, and in due time was brought to bed of a son ; whom she named Samuel, that is, asked of God.

The next year Elkanah went up again with his family to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and to confirm his vow, concerning the dedication of Samuel to God ; which shews he was privy, and made himself a party, to his wife's vow.

But Hannah, being a nurse, desired her husband to excuse her from going up until the child should be weaned, and then she would go up with him, that he might appear before the Lord, and abide in his service for ever. Which good intention her husband approving, consented that she should tarry with the child until she had weaned him ; praying that the Lord would establish his word concerning him : which implies, that the Lord, upon Hannah's praying for a son, and vowing to dedicate him to the Lord, had foretold some great good concerning him.

Now when Hannah had weaned her little Samuel, she took him up with her (young as he was) to the yearly sacrifice, with three bullocks, an ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine. And having brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, they slew a bullock ; and then bringing the child to Eli, she told him she was the woman that at such a time stood by him there, praying unto the Lord.

'It was for this child, said she, that I then prayed : and the Lord hath given me my petition, which I asked of him. Therefore, added she, I have returned him to the Lord ; as long as he liveth he shall be returned to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there,' saith the text ; but without certainty which *he* it was, whether Eli or Samuel. Some annotators say it was Eli, who gave thanks to the Lord for having heard

and graciously answered Hannah's petition. Others say it was Samuel, who, as he was instructed, bowed before the Lord: and the word translated worshiped, signifies to bow. However it was, devout Hannah brake forth into a triumphant song, composed of praises, thanksgivings and prayer: which read in chap. ii, ver. 1 to 11.

The solemnity being over, and Elkanah with his family ready to depart, Eli the priest pronounced a solemn blessing upon him and his wife Hannah, saying, 'The Lord give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the Lord,' meaning Samuel, 1 Sam. ii.

Him, at their departure, they left behind them with Eli; and he being girded with a linen ephod, did minister before the Lord, as Eli directed him. And once a year, when his mother came up with her husband, to offer the yearly sacrifice, she made him a little coat, and brought it him. 'And the child Samuel, the text says, grew before the Lord.' Which manner of speech may well be supposed to have respect, not only to a natural growth in bodily stature, but (and perhaps more especially) to an inward growth of divine graces, and excellent endowments of mind necessary to fit and qualify him for the service he was devoted to.

And since Hannah, after her long barrenness, had modestly asked but one son, and that, that she might dedicate him to God, the Lord was pleased to visit her again, so that she conceived and bare three sons more, and two daughters besides, to be with her, and to be a comfort to her.

Eli himself had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, grown up to be men; and both lewd young men, who regarded not the Lord; but bearing themselves high upon the authority of the priesthood, domineered over the men, and defiled the women.

And to such a pass they had brought things, that they would neither be content with the part or portion which God had assigned them, of the flesh of the sacrifice, nor stay the time appointed for them to receive

it; but they would both be their own carvers, and in their own time: so that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a trident or flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand, and striking it into the cauldron amongst the flesh, all that the flesh-hook brought up, the priest took for himself: and thus they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

Besides, when the priest's palate was more for roast than boiled, his servant would come before the fat was burnt, and say to the men that sacrificed, 'Give flesh to roast for the priest: for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.' This was directly contrary to the law. Yet if any man did but say, Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as thou pleasest; the priest's servant would answer, 'Nay, but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.'

Thus did these swaggering priests oppress the people, and transgress the law of God, whereby they begat in the people a dislike to the service of the Lord, so that they had no mind to offer at all. This made the sin of the priests very great before the Lord: which yet did not excuse the people from being also guilty, in neglecting the service of the Lord.

By this time Eli was grown very old. And though he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, yet he did not restrain, nor punish them, as he, being not only their father, but the chief magistrate, ought to have done.... See Deut. xxi, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. But in a sort of easy way, he said to them, 'Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.... Nay, my sons: for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?' This light reproof they as lightly regarded; for they had provoked the Lord to harden them to destruction.

Then came a man of God to Eli, with this message ; ‘ Thus saith the Lord, did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father (to wit, Aaron) when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh ? And did I choose him of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me ? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel ? Why then do ye kick at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in mine habitation ? And why honourest thou thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of the offerings of Israel my people ? ’ Whence it is observable, that in the judgment of God, they that indulge their children in that which offends God, honour them above him.

Having thus set forth the Lord’s beneficence towards Eli’s house, and his and his sons’ ingratitude, the man of God proceeded to denounce the divine sentence against them ; first more generally thus :

‘ Wherefore the God of Israel saith, I said indeed (to wit, at the first institution of the priesthood, *Exod. xxviii. 43, and xxxix. 9*) that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me (viz. in the priesthood) for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me ; for them that honour me I will honour, and them that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.’ Whence again we may observe, that the indulging of children in their evil courses, to the dishonour of God, and contempt of his service, is accounted by God a despising of him.

From this general, the man of God goes on to denounce a more particular judgment upon Eli and his house. ‘ Behold (said he, in the name of the Lord) the days come that I will cut off thine arm (thy strength, by which thou shouldest help thyself) and (not only thy arm, who art an old and worn out man, but) the arm of thy father’s house ; that henceforth there shall not be an old man in thy house forever.... (And that, as old as he was, he might expect to see

the accomplishment of this sentence in his own lifetime, he added) And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel (or instead of all the good which God would have done to Israel). And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in one day they shall both die. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, (viz. Zadok, 1 Kings ii. 35) who shall do according to that which is in my heart, and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever.' Then, to shew Eli the wretched poverty that his posterity shall fall into, he added, 'And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thy house, shall come and crouch to him (Zadok) for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may have a piece of bread to eat.'

Who this man of God was, that brought this unwelcome message to Eli, is very uncertain. Tremellius and Junius, in their notes upon this place, take him to be Samuel. But that seems not likely; both for that Samuel was then too young, and in the next chapter is set forth as one not yet acquainted with the voice of the Lord; and also for that the Lord, when he had spoken to Samuel, tells him, as a thing he knew not of before, that he had denounced a judgment against Eli and his house. Certain it is, that it was a dark time. There was no open vision, no certain known prophet, such as Moses had been before, and as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and others were afterwards: but the word of the Lord was precious, that is, rare, and seldom heard in those days.

Eli now grown very old, his eyes began to wax dim, so that he could see but little. And one night, being gone to rest in his place, which was in that part of the court of the Lord's house which was next the taberna-

cle, and where the priests' chambers were, before the lamp of God went out in the morning, that is, before day, the Lord called Samuel; who was also in bed in his apartment, in the further part of the tabernacle, where the Levites had their lodgings, 1 Sam. iii.

Samuel, hearing himself called, answered, as the manner was, 'Here am I:' and starting up, ran to Eli, as supposing he had called him. But when Eli told him he had not called him, he went and lay down again.

He had not lain long ere the Lord called him again. Whereupon, as before, he got up, and went to Eli, and said, 'Here am I: for thou didst call me.' But Eli told him he called him not; and bid him go and lie down again.

Samuel was young, supposed to be about twelve years old, and did not so know the Lord, as to have the word of the Lord revealed unto him. And Eli was not so regardful of the Lord's appearance, as his years and station required him to be: else he might sooner have understood that it was the Lord that called Samuel.

Scarce was Samuel well settled in his bed, when the Lord called him again the third time. Upon which the diligent child, not discouraged by his two former disappointments, arose and went again to Eli, and said, 'Here I am: for thou didst call me.' This third summons roused dull Eli, and gave him to perceive that the Lord had called the child. Which his apprehension he imparted to Samuel; and bidding him go to bed again, directed him, that if the Lord should call him again, he should say, 'Speak, Lord: for thy servant heareth.'

By that time Samuel was composed to rest, the Lord came and stood (a phrase used to reach man's low capacity) and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Whereupon Samuel, as Eli had instructed him, readily answered: 'Speak, for thy servant heareth.'

Then said the Lord to Samuel, 'Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform

What have we, said he to his servant, to make a present for the man of God? for our provisions are spent.

The servant having searched his purse, told his master he had found there the fourth part of a shekel of silver; and he was willing to give the man of God that, to tell them their way.

That was but a very small sum, not above three-pence three farthings; yet that, it seems, was more than his master, as near to the kingdom as he was, had about him: and Saul being glad to hear of that, said to his servant, well said, come, let us go; and on they went towards the city where the man of God dwelt.

As they went up the hill that led to the city, they met young maidens going out to draw water; of whom they inquired if the seer were there. For beforetime in Israel when a man would go to inquire of God, he used to say, come, and let us go to the seer: for he that was in after times called a prophet, was in former times called a seer.

The maidens told them he was there, being come thither but that day to a solemn feast of the people in the high place; and that if they made haste, they might straightway find him, before he had went to the high place to eat: for the people would not eat until he was come, and blessed the feast.

With this information, Saul and his servant went on; and when they were come into the city, Samuel came out and met them, as he was going up to the high place. For the Lord had revealed to Samuel, on the day before, that about that time next day he would send him a man out of the land of Benjamin, whom he should anoint captain over Israel. And when Samuel now saw Saul, the Lord told him, 'Behold the man whom I spake to thee of: this same shall reign over my people.'

Now when Saul was come up to Samuel, not knowing him, he inquired of him for the seer's house: and Samuel told him, he was the seer. Then inviting him

to eat with him that day, he bid him go up before him to the high place : telling him, he would let him go to-morrow ; and would then tell him all that was in his heart.

In the mean time he wished him not to trouble himself about the asses, for they were found. And to give him at present a little touch of the main business, he added ; ‘ And on whom is all the desire of Israel ? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father’s house ? ’

Saul, seeming to wonder that he should speak after that manner to him, desired him to consider that he was a Benjamite, one of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, at least since the slaughter that had been made upon them in the Levite’s case, Judg. xx, and his family the least of all the families of that tribe.

This discourse Samuel brake off, by taking Saul and his servant into the parlour with him. Where setting them down in the chief place, among them that were invited to eat, which were about thirty persons, he bid the cook bring that portion of meat which he had before ordered him to set by : who thereupon brought forth the shoulder, and that which was upon it, probably the breast, those being the two joints allotted for the priests and their families, Levit. x. 14, and set it before Saul.

After they had eaten, and were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel taking Saul up upon the top of the house, which was made flat to walk upon, had further communication with him that evening. And early next morning calling him up, that he might send him away, they went out together : and as they were going down towards the end of the city, Samuel bid Saul order his servant to pass on before, but stand still himself for a while, that he might shew him what God had said concerning him.

As soon as the servant was gone out of sight, Samuel taking a vial of oil, poured it upon the head of Saul, and kissed him, which was a token of subjection and homage to him as his sovereign : adding, that he did this, because the Lord had anointed him to be captain

over his inheritance. This is supposed to fall about the thirtieth year of Samuel's government, 1 Sam. x.*

Then, to assure Saul that this thing was of the Lord, Samuel told him divers particular passages that should befall him that day, as he went home. As that he should find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, who should tell him the asses he went to seek were found, and his father was now in great sorrow for him; that when he came to the plain of Tabor, there should meet him three men, going up to God to Beth-el; one carrying three kids, another three loaves of bread, and the third a bottle of wine; and that they should salute him, and give him two loaves of bread, which he should receive; and that after that he should meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psalter, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them; and that they should prophesy; and that the spirit of the Lord should come upon him, and he should prophesy with them and should be turned into another man. 'And, said Samuel, when the signs are come unto thee, do thou as occasion shall serve thee, behave thyself like a king; for God will be with thee.'

As soon as Saul had turned his back to go from Samuel onward of his way, the Lord gave him another heart: and all those signs, which Samuel had foretold him, came to pass that day.

Now, though Samuel had thus anointed Saul privately, which no man knew of but themselves; yet for the general satisfaction of the people, and that the choice and inauguration of their king might be public and solemn, he called them together unto the Lord to Mizpeh. To which place the ark of the Lord was brought, and the priest was come with the Urim and Thummim, that the choice might be openly made and declared, by casting of lots before the Lord.

When the people were come to Mizpeh, and Samuel had again, in a short exprobatory speech, taxed them with ingratitude to God, in rejecting him, who had been their deliverer out of all their adversities and

tribulations, and calling for a king to be set over them, he bid them present themselves before the Lord by their tribes, and by their thousands.

When therefore all the tribes of Israel were brought near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken; that is, the lot fell upon that tribe. And when the tribe of Benjamin came near by their families, the family of Matri was taken; and in that family Saul the son of Kish was taken. But though the lot fell on him they could not find him: for he, sure before-hand of the office, had absented himself.

Inquiring thereupon further of the Lord concerning him, whether he would come or no: the answer was, that he had hid himself among the stuff.

Thither then they ran to fetch him; and having brought and set him among them, he was higher than all the people from the shoulders upwards. Which Samuel observing to them, said, 'See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen (for though they chose a king, the Lord chose the king) that there is none like him amongst all the people:' at which the people gave a general shout, and cried, 'God save the king,' or may the king live.

Then Samuel, as he had before told the people, chap. viii. 11, what a king would do, now told them what their king should or ought to do: he told them the manner of the kingdom (probably out of Deut. xvii) and he wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. Which done, he dismissed the people.

Saul also went home to Gibeah: and a band of men, whose hearts God had touched, and inclined thereunto, waited on him home. But the children of Belial, the mob, or more unruly part of the people, despised him, saying, in contempt, 'How shall this man save us?' Neither would they bring him any present, as an acknowledgment that he was their king. However, he discreetly overlooked it, as if he had not heard them.

By this time the messengers which the men of Jabesh-Gilead had sent abroad, to acquaint their brethren with the distress they were in, were come to Gibeah of

Saul, and had told the tidings in the ears of the people : which made them all lift up their voices and weep.

Which when Saul observed, who at that time was coming out of the field, and, notwithstanding his regality, driving an herd of cattle before him ; he asked, What ailed the people, that they wept ? And being told the strait that the men of Jabesh were in, the spirit of the Lord came upon him ; and his anger being greatly kindled against the Ammonites, he took a yoke of oxen, and hewing them in pieces, sent them with speed throughout all the coasts of Israel, with this short but sharp message : ‘ Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul, and after Samuel, for the young king thought it adviseable to strengthen his authority with the name and company of the old prophet, so shall it be done unto his oxen,’ 1 Sam. xi.

Hereupon the fear of the Lord fell upon the people, and they came out as one man : so that when they were mustered, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah, who bordering on the Philistines, could not so well spare men from their frontiers, were thirty thousand.

When Saul and Samuel saw their strength, they bid the messengers, which came from Jabesh-Gilead, go back and tell their citizens, that to-morrow, by that time the sun was hot, they should have help.

This good news made them glad. And that they might contribute to their own deliverance, by making the Ammonites secure, they sent them word, that to-morrow they would come out to them, to be dealt with as they pleased.

But on the morrow, Saul, having divided the people into three companies, that he might give the onset in three places, fell into the midst of the Ammonitish host in the morning watch, and slew them until the heat of the day : and such of them as escaped the slaughter, were so scattered that there were not two of them left together.

This great victory, and so great a deliverance thereby from so cruel and insulting a foe, was an encourag-

ing beginning to the new king and his favourites ; some of whom calling to remembrance that some others had before spoken despitefully of Saul, said now to Samuel, ' Who is he that said, shall Saul reign over us ? Bring the men, that we may put them to death.' But Saul wisely and generously answered, ' There shall not a man be put to death this day : for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.' Implying that such days, being times of festivity and joy, should not be clouded with saddening executions.

Samuel, willing to take away all animosities from among the people, and to give opportunity to those who before had stood out, to come in now, and receive Saul for their king, proposed to the people that they should go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there : that is, proclaim their king there anew. Accordingly to Gilgal all the people went, and there before the Lord they unanimously made Saul king : which done, they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord ; and both king and people rejoiced together greatly.

But a little to allay their joy, Samuel took occasion (some say here at Gilgal, others think before they went from Jabesh) to expostulate again with them with respect both to his own administration, while he was in the government, and to their offence in altering the government.

With respect to himself, he put them in mind, that he had answered them in every thing they had asked of him ; and, as they now saw, had made them a king, according to their desire. And inasmuch as he himself was now grown old and grey headed, and his sons were not now over them, as heretofore, but with them as fellow subjects to their king, there was nothing to awe them ; but that they might freely impeach him if they could, he having been conversant amongst them from his very childhood.

As a challenge therefore to them all, to convict him, if they could, he said, ' Behold here I am ; witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed.

Whose ox or ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whom have I received a bribe, to blind mine eyes therewith? And I will restore it you,' 1 Sam. xii.

They answered, 'Thou hast not defrauded nor oppressed us; neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand.' They might have reminded him of his sons' taking bribes, and perverting judgment: but since they knew he knew it, for they had told him of it before, chap. viii. 3, they modestly forbore to repeat it.

Then calling God and the king to witness that they had acquitted him, and they acknowledging it, he went on to reason with them concerning the righteous acts of the Lord, which he had done to their fathers and to them; recounting to them how the Lord had advanced Moses and Aaron, and by their conduct had brought up their fathers out of Egypt: that being provoked by their disobedience to sell them into the hand of Sisera, king Jabin's captain, and of the Philistines, and of the king of Moab, when they repented, confessed their sins, and cried unto the Lord, he delivered them by Jerub-baal, whose proper name was Gideon, and by Bedan, whom some take to be Samson, others Jear, by Jephthah, and by himself. Notwithstanding which, they no sooner saw Nahash the king of Ammon coming against them, but they came unto him and told him, they would have a king to reign over them, when as the Lord their God was their rightful king.

Having thus briefly opened to them their offence, he tells them, that notwithstanding all this, if they will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, both they, and also their king that reigned over them, should continue following the Lord their God: but if they will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against his commandment, then shall the hand of the Lord be against them, as it was against their fathers.

And to assure them that he spake not this to them of his own head, or from a personal disgust, or offence of

mind, but from the Lord, he told them the Lord would give them a convincing evidence. For whereas it was then wheat-harvest, and very fine harvest weather, 'I will call, said he, unto the Lord, and he will send thunder and rain; that you may see your wickedness is great in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.'

Accordingly, upon Samuel's praying, the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; which made the people greatly fear the Lord and Samuel. And they came all to Samuel, saying, 'Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for unto all our sins we have added this evil, to ask us a king.'

Samuel exhorted them, that though they had done amiss, yet they should not cease from following the Lord; but should serve the Lord with all their heart, and not turn aside after the gods of the nations; which being but vain idols, could neither deliver nor profit them. And withall he encouraged them not to despair of mercy: for since it had pleased the Lord to make them his people, he would not forsake them, for his great name's sake, if they did not forsake him.... As for himself, he assured them, that he would not only incessantly pray for them, as he held it his duty to do, but would teach them the good and right way: which was to fear the Lord, and serve him in truth, with all their heart; considering how great things he had done for them. Yet that they might not grow too secure, he left this lesson at parting: 'But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.'

Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul, was left, it seems, to guard the frontiers, when his father went against the Ammonites. And being a courageous prince, full of youthful heat, and desirous of martial honour, he had fallen upon a garrison of the Philistines, planted upon a neighbouring hill, and smitten them.

Of this the Philistines soon had notice, and resolving to revenge the injury, raised an army, consisting of thirty thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and an infinite number of foot: with which they came

up, and pitched in Michmash eastward from Beth-aven, to fight with Israel.

The Israelites also, having heard of this exploit of Jonathan's, and how enraged the Philistines were for that cause against them, were by sound of trumpet gathered together to Saul at Gilgal, 1 Sam. xiii.

When Samuel had anointed Saul privately, chap x. 1, he counselled him to go to Gilgal, and tarry there seven days, till he came to him; promising to come to him there, both to offer burnt offerings, &c. and to shew him what he should do, ver. 8.

Saul lay now encamped at Gilgal, expecting Samuel every day. But he not coming when they looked for him, the people, quite discouraged by the absence of the prophet, which they took for an inauspicious omen, did generally forsake their new and so much desired king, shifting every one for himself. And so great did the fear of the Philistines prevail, that most of them hid themselves; some in caves, some in thickets, some in rocks, in high places some, and some in pits; and some, not thinking themselves safe any where on that side Jordan, went over to their brethren on the other side the river.

Reduced to this extremity, and out of hopes now of Samuel's coming, Saul called for a burnt offering and peace offering, and offered the burnt offering: which he had no sooner done, but Samuel came; of whose coming Saul having notice, went forth to meet and salute him.

Samuel immediately asked him what he had done? Unto whom Saul relating both what he had done, and the reason why, Samuel straightway told him he had done foolishly, charging him that he had not kept the commandment of the Lord his God, which he had commanded him; which if he had done, the Lord would have established his kingdom over Israel forever: whereas now his kingdom should not continue; for that the Lord had sought him a man after his own heart, to be captain over his people.

This severe reproof, and downright charge of having broke the Lord's command, would make one doubt

that Saul had not waited the full time of seven days for Samuel's coming, according to appointment, but had offered the burnt offering before the seven days were out, and that Samuel had come within the time: but that the text is so express, ver. 8, 'That he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed; but Samuel came not,' &c.

Whatever was the cause of this delay in Samuel, whether it was accidental, or designed for a trial to the new king; yet certainly it gave him an unhappy trip, and made him stumble at the very threshold of his government.

Samuel upon this, departing from Gilgal, gat him up to Gibeah of Benjamin. Whither also Saul, with his son Jonathan, soon after led those few that stuck to him; who upon a muster were found to be but six hundred men, and those but ill provided. For the Philistines, that the Hebrews might not make themselves swords or spears, had taken care before, that there should not be a smith found throughout all the land of Israel. So that the poor Israelites, while the Philistines had dominion over them, were obliged to go down to them for their smithing work in husbandry, to sharpen their plough-shares, coulter, axes, and mattocks, when they were grown too blunt to be whetted with a file.

Here then was an army in a manner without arms: for, it seems, not a man of them had sword or spear, but Saul himself, and Jonathan his son. Yet may not this be so understood as if there were no more arms in Israel, or among the Israelites: for, notwithstanding all the politic cautions of the Philistines to prevent it, the Israelites no doubt had arms though they kept them privately. How else could they but just before have made such a slaughter of the Ammonites at Jabesh-Gilead? chap. xi. 11. Where also, if any of them had wanted arms, they might have furnished themselves from the slain. May it not therefore be supposed, that these few that staid with Saul, in so great a fright that they trembled, chap. xiii. 7, as well as the rest that had run away and hid themselves,

ver. 6, had laid aside their weapons, that they might not be found in arms by the Philistines.

Meanwhile the advanced guard of the Philistines sallied out of their camp in three bodies, directing their courses three several ways. But their main body, or standing army, reached to the straits or narrow passage of Michmash.

Jonathan observing this, and weighing with himself the extreme danger Israel was in, filled with heroic valour, and a religious confidence in God, he left his father under a pomegranate tree in Micron, which signifies fear, with about six hundred faint hearted soldiers, and Ahiah the priest, and withdrew himself privately from the army, attended only by the young man that bore his armour, to whom alone he imparted his intention; and directing his course towards the place where the enemy lay, he said to his armour-bearer, 'Come, let us go over unto the camp, or garrison, of these uncircumcised. It may be the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord, to work by many or by few.' His armour-bearer encouraged him; wishing him to go on, and do all that was in his heart: assuring him that he would not fail to follow him, 1 Sam. xiv.*

Whereupon Jonathan proposed the enterprize thus: 'We will pass over, said he, so near unto these men, that we may discover ourselves unto them. And if, when they see us, they shall say unto us, Tarry till we come to you, then we will tarry indeed, and not go up to them: but if they should say, Come unto us, then we will go up; and this shall be for a sign unto us, that the Lord hath delivered them into our hand.'

Thus resolved, they went on, until they were discovered by the Philistines' garrison, or out-guards; who at first sight of them cried out, 'Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.' But quickly some of the soldiers calling to them, said, 'Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing.' This, so aptly answering the sign before proposed, did greatly animate Jonathan.

The way by which they were to pass was both very steep, and very strait or narrow, having a sharp rock on either side: yet Jonathan, full of faith and courage, bidding his armour-bearer come up after him, climbed up, as well and as fast as he could, on his hands and his feet; and his armour-bearer followed him. And being got up, they shewed the Philistines a thing: for they fell so furiously upon the out-guards, that in a little time, and little space of ground, they slew about twenty of the Philistines.

So bold an onset, so successfully carried on, might well, as it did, startle the secure and confident Philistines. But the terror, which thereupon the Lord struck them with, ran so universally throughout the host, and seized so deeply on them, that a great trembling possessed them all; and the very earth trembled also: for it was a trembling sent from God. And in this fright that possessed the Philistines, they fell foul one upon another; and every man's sword was against his fellow.

Meanwhile Saul's centinels, who stood in Gibeah to watch the motion of the Philistines, observing the multitude there to grow thinner, and that they knocked one another down, acquainted Saul therewith. Who thereupon suspecting some attempt to be made by some of his men upon the Philistines, which might engage the armies, ordered the people with him to be numbered, that he might know who was gone. And finding Jonathan and his armour bearer missing, he called in haste for the priest to bring the ark of the Lord, that he might ask counsel what they should do. But while he was yet speaking to the priest about it, the noise and tumult increasing in the Philistines' host, he bid the priest stop: being loth, it seems, to lose so much time from falling in upon the disordered Philistines, as the asking counsel of the Lord would take up.

Wherefore drawing forth with all speed his men to the battle, and the Hebrews on all sides flocking in, as well they that had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, as they that for shelter had fled before to the Philis-

times' camp, they all flew in now to join with Israel against the Philistines, who themselves were busy in killing one another. And there being by that means opportunity enough for the unarmed, or ill armed Israelites, to arm themselves sufficiently with the weapons of the slaughtered Philistines, they gave the Philistines a very great overthrow : and so the Lord saved Israel that day.

The just joy for so great a deliverance was somewhat abated, at least interrupted, by an unhappy accident. Saul when he perceived the Philistines in disorder, killing one another in their camp, before he drew out his men to the battle, caused proclamation to be made in his camp, by which he adjured his men to fast till evening : adding this execration, ' Cursed be the man that eateth any food until the evening, that I may be avenged of mine enemies.'

This, it seems, he did, to restrain the people from falling too soon upon the booty, and feasting themselves with the enemy's provisions ; whereby they might lose the opportunity of obtaining a complete and full victory. And had he done this by a bare command, without any execration added, his policy therein had not, perhaps, been much amiss.

But having made a wrong step before, for which he had been reproved by the prophet, he went on now in his own will, following the dictates of his own mind, without asking counsel of the Lord, which he ought to have done ; and which, as a known duty, he was about to have done, when he called the priest to bring the ark of God ; but through a preposterous haste, fearing to lose time by staying to inquire of God, he stopped the priest again ; bidding him withdraw his hand.

However, by this charge he defeated his own purpose ; hindering that which he would have effected, and missing that which he would have obtained.

For the people for want of sustenance, having probably through fear and continual watching fasted too long before, were by this time grown so feeble, that

they were not able to pursue the Philistines, as they might have done, had they took some short refection ; which gave opportunity to many of the Philistines to escape by flight, who otherwise must have fallen into their hands.

But this was not all the mischief that attended this execrable charge. For Jonathan, being gone from the camp before that charge was given, knew nothing of it. And coming with his men to a wood, where honey dropped, and lay upon the ground ; he, as he passed along, dipped the end of his staff in the honey, and put it to his mouth. The rest of the people, though very weary and faint, would not touch a drop of the honey ; fearing the curse wherewith Saul had bound them.

Jonathan was probably as faint as they, if not more, having been longer engaged in the action ; so that his sight was grown weak through faintness : but upon this little refreshment his strength returned, and his eyes grew vigorous.

It is reasonable to think, that observing the backwardness of the people, Jonathan might invite them to eat of the honey, that they might be refreshed as well as he ; because the text says, ver, 28, one of the people answered and said, ‘Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day.’

When Jonathan heard this, he was troubled ; not for himself, for he knew that curse could not reach him ; who neither consented to it, nor knew of it. But he was troubled that his father, by that rash oath, had hindered the completing of so great and eminent a deliverance. Neither could he contain himself from saying, ‘My father hath troubled the land, For see, I pray you, said he, how mine eyes, which through faintness were grown weak and dim, have been enlightened, that is, have recovered their strength, since I tasted a little of this honey : how much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found ? For had there not been now a much greater slaughter amongst the Philistines ?’

Whether the people took encouragement, from the words and example of Jonathan, to satisfy their hunger as soon as they could ; or whether, which is most probable, they tarried till evening, for they were afterwards taxed for eating flesh with the blood, not for eating within the time prohibited, they being sharp set flew upon the spoil ; and seizing on sheep, oxen, and calves, slew them on the ground, where the blood could not well drain from them : and not having patience to stay till the blood could be thoroughly drawn out, they fell greedily on, and eat the flesh with the blood in it. This being told to Saul, he expressed some zeal against this evil ; and calling for a great stone to be brought him, he raised an altar unto the Lord, and commanded the people to bring every one his ox and his sheep thither, and slay them there, that the blood might be well pressed out ; which they did.

After the people had satisfied themselves with food, Saul proposed to renew the pursuit after the enemy ; saying, ‘ Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light : and let us not leave a man of them.’

The people expressing their readiness, the priest interposed, advising them to consult the Lord first. Whereupon Saul asked counsel of God, whether he should go down after the Philistines ; and whether he would deliver them into the hand of Israel. But the Lord did not vouchsafe to answer him that day.

This made Saul uneasy. And being willing to impute this repulse to a breach of his charge given before about not eating, he resolved to have the lot cast, that he might thereby find out who had broken his command : swearing by an high oath, ‘ As the Lord liveth that saveth Israel,’ that if it should prove to be his son Jonathan, he should surely die.

The people (who generally knew that Jonathan had tasted of the honey) were so astonished at this dangerous oath, that they made him no answer. But the elders being gathered together, Saul appointed them with the people, to stand on the one side, and he, with

his son Jonathan, stood on the other side, as the two parties, upon one of which the general lot must fall.

Then addressing himself to God, he implored him to give a perfect lot. So we read the English text: but the margin says, to shew the innocent.

Upon the casting of the lots the people were acquitted: and the doubt lay between Saul and Jonathan. Whereupon the lot being cast again between them two, it fell upon Jonathan: by which (say Tremellius and Junius on the place) the innocent was shewed.

Saul then asking him what he had done, Jonathan answered, 'I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod (or staff) that was in my hand: and must I die for it?' Saul thereupon swore again, 'God do so, and more also; for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.'

At that the people began to rouse; and expostulating the matter with Saul, said, 'Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid.' And that they might be all as positive as Saul had been, they, using the same form of words which he had used, said, 'As the Lord liveth, there shall not an hair of his head fall to the ground (that is, he shall not suffer any thing at all, how little soever): for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.' And Saul leaving the pursuit of the Philistines, gave them opportunity to get back to their own country.

Upon this, it is said, Saul took the kingdom over Israel, ver. 47. From which words some think, that the two years wherein he is said to have reigned, chap. xiii. 1, was all the time that he reigned lawfully; and that after that, declining from that manner of ruling, which from the Lord Samuel had prescribed, and recorded in a book, chap. x. 25, he governed arbitrarily by a standing force.

And it may not be unlikely that he, who was a jealous prince, and always regardful of his own safety, observing how dear his son was to the people, might not think himself altogether out of danger of being dethroned, and therefore took what measure he thought

best to secure the kingdom to himself: of which he, a soldier, might probably judge a standing army the likeliest.

Nor wanted he occasions for raising one, and for keeping it up when raised; for he had wars on all hands, and fought against all his enemies on every side; against Moab, and Ammon, and Edom, and the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines, against whom he had war all his days. For he was indeed a martial prince, and loved a soldier, and therefore when he met with any man that excelled in strength or valour, he took him into his service.

Nor was he yet so much out of favour, but that, although he had missed his way in his former enterprize against the Philistines, the Lord would employ him again in another expedition, that he might have opportunity to recover himself, and make some amends for his former slip.

It was not long therefore before the prophet Samuel came to him again, with a message from the Lord. Which yet before he delivered, that Saul might the more heedfully regard what he had to say, he thus introduced:

‘The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, even over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord,’
1 Sam. xv.

Having thus prefaced to quicken his attention, he delivered his message in these words:

‘Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel; how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have. Spare them not: but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.’

How sharp soever this message might be thought, yet it was so plain, that there could not be any possibility of mistaking it. Sharp indeed it may seem to be;

especially if it be considered, that it was executed upon a nation for a fact committed four hundred years before; and for which too the aggressors were then punished in their own persons, *Exod. xvii. 13.* Which shews God's faithfulness and love to his people, and that first or last he will avenge their cause. Yet has it not been sharp enough to deter the enemies of God's people in succeeding ages from lying in wait against them, or otherwise oppressing them.

Saul having received the message, made no hesitation. But forthwith gathering his forces together, marched forth against Amalek with a very great army, consisting of two hundred and ten thousand men.

But before he committed any act of hostility, finding the Kenites, of the posterity of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, dwelling among the Amalekites, he remembered, and acknowledged to them, that they, that is, their ancestors, had shewn kindness to the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt; and therefore he warned them to speed away, and depart from the Amalekites, lest, in the common fate of war he should destroy them with the Amalekites. And here is an instance of kindness returned, for kindness received as long before as the Amalekites' trespass was.

The Kenites took his counsel, and got out of the way. And then fell Saul upon the Amalekites, and smote them so, that it is said, 'He utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.' Which had he done indeed, neither had Ziklag been afterwards sacked and burnt by the hand of the Amalekites, *chap. xxxi*; nor had Saul himself been slain by the hand of an Amalekite, *2 Sam. i. 8 and 10.* But it may be supposed he killed all he met with, or found, except the king of the Amalekites, whose title was Agag.

Him he took alive, and purposely spared, because he was their king; whom perhaps, for that very reason, he ought to have shewn least favour unto; not because he was a king, but because he was their king.

For as they now suffered for the treachery and cruelty of their ancestors, so it is reasonable to suppose, that the Agag, or king, of the Amalekites, who then ruled when they did that despite to Israel, was more deeply guilty of both plotting and executing that design against Israel, than any private or single Amalekite could be. But Saul, a king, was willing to save this king, though against the express command of the King of kings.

This was part of Saul's transgression: but this was not all; for besides the king, Saul and the people (for upon them he laid it, and they are joined together) spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, of the fat beasts, and the lambs; and indeed of all that was good, and would not destroy them. But every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly; notwithstanding the command was so plain and express to smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they had, that it admitted of no reserve, either of person or thing.

Before Samuel could have notice of this, either by messenger or report, he had it from the Lord; who so highly resented this inexcusable disobedience of Saul, that, expressing himself after the manner of men, he said to Samuel, 'It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me; and hath not performed my commandments.' This so grieved Samuel, that he cried unto the Lord all night: no doubt on behalf of Saul and his people.

Early next morning gat Samuel up to meet Saul; and understanding that he was come up to Carmel, where he had made an halt to refresh his men, and was passed on, and gone down to Gilgal, he followed him thither, and there he found him.

At their first congress, Saul very briskly said to Samuel, 'Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.' Ay! said Samuel, 'What meaneth then the bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen, which I hear?'

‘They have brought them, said Saul, from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.’

‘Stay, said Samuel then to Saul, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night.’ Saul bidding him say on, Samuel proceeded, and said,

‘When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint thee king over Israel? And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?’

Saul, still justifying himself said, ‘Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me; and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites: but it was the people that took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal.’

Samuel replied, ‘Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices, as in having his voice obeyed? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice: and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion, added he, is as the sin of witchcraft: and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.’ Wherefore, now Saul, hear thy doom: ‘Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.’

Saul bore up against Samuel till now: nor did he seem concerned at any thing he had said before. But these last words, of his being rejected from the kingdom, touched him to the quick. At this he presently cried out, I have sinned; and confessed he had transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and the words of the prophet; yet would have excused himself, on pretence he had done it for fear of the people, and to answer their desire. And having desired him to par-

don his sin, he asked him to accompany him that he might worship the Lord. But Samuel refused to go with him; and gave him this reason for it: 'Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.'

Then, as Samuel turned about to be gone, Saul, to stay him, caught hold on the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. Whereupon Samuel took occasion to tell him, the Lord had rent the kingdom of Israel from him, and had given it to a neighbour of his, that was better than he. This neighbour, as it appeared soon after, was David; though Samuel did not then know who it should be, but spake, as a prophet, by divine direction.

And to assure Saul that he spake this, not of himself, but from the Lord, and thereby to impress the sense thereof the deeper in him, he added: 'And also, the strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent: for, though he spake to man according to man's capacity, yet he is not a man, that he should repent.'

Saul was not so sensibly touched with any thing, as the mention of his losing the kingdom. And he seemed apprehensive that Samuel's refusing to go with him, and join with him in the worship of God, would lessen his esteem with the people, and alienate the affections of his courtiers from him. Therefore acknowledging again that he had sinned, he added, 'Yet honour me now; I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel; and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.' And Samuel, having another piece of service yet to do, which perhaps he knew not, or thought not of before, followed after Saul: and Saul performed his devotions.

Then called Samuel for Agag, the king of the Amalekites, to be brought to him. The captive king, expecting to have a favourable reception from an old man and a prophet, came pleasantly forward, saying, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.' But he soon found his mistake. For Samuel, without using any ceremony, or saying any more to him, than, 'As thy sword

hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women,' fell on him, and hewed him in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.*

This was, if I may so say, the sacrifice Samuel went back after Saul to offer, which Saul little thought of: and having performed his service, Samuel departed to his own house at Ramah, and Saul to his at Gibeah of Saul. After which, Samuel never came more to see Saul, yet could not forbear to mourn for him.

For this the Lord gave him a gentle reproof: asking him, 'How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel.' Then bidding him fill his horn with oil, 'Go, said he: I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons, 1 Sam. xvi.

Though Samuel had before told Saul that God had rejected him, had rent the kingdom from him, and had given it to a neighbour of his, more worthy than he, words provoking enough to an angry martial king; and did it boldly without shew of fear; yet now, when he was directed to go and anoint that other, the sense of the danger startled the prophet. 'Alas, said he, how can I go? If Saul hear it, he will kill me.'

The Lord knowing the sincerity of his prophet, overlooked the frailty of his nature, and kindly proposed him an expedient, to remove at once both the danger and his fear; 'Take, said he, an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice (to offer a peace offering, or hold a feast) to the Lord. And call Jesse to the feast, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I shall then name unto thee.'

Samuel, following the Lord's direction, went to Beth-lehem: but his coming thither in that manner, put the elders of the town in great fear. They doubted some grievous crime had been committed, which he came to inquire into; and asked him, if he came peaceably: he answered, yea; and told them, he was come to hold a feast unto the Lord. For sacrifice, in

a strict and proper sense, as a burnt offering for sin, might not be offered, by the law, in any other place than before the ark: but peace offerings and feasts might. Therefore he bid them sanctify, or prepare themselves, and come {with him to the sacrifice, or feast; and he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and invited them to it.

Now when Samuel was come into Jesse's house, and saw his sons about him, he quickly fixed his eye upon Eliab, who was the eldest son, and a proper man; fit in his judgment to succeed so tall a man as Saul. Concluding therefore him to be the man, he said, (probably in himself) 'Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.' But the Lord checking Samuel, said, 'Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'

Jesse (unto whom it is probable Samuel had opened the cause and end of his coming) seeing Eliab set aside, called Abinadab, his second son, and made him pass before Samuel; who warned by his former mistake, would not now trust to his own judgment, but kept to his sure guide, the voice of the Lord within: by which instructed, he said, 'Neither hath the Lord chosen this' (though his name signified, amongst other things, a prince). Then Jesse made Shamma, his third son, to pass by (whose name signifies desolation or perdition): and of him also Samuel said, 'Neither hath the Lord chosen this.' Thus Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel, and none of them was the right.

Samuel thereupon asked Jesse, if these were all his children; Jesse told him, there was one more, the youngest of them all: but he was abroad, keeping the sheep. 'Send then, said Samuel, and fetch him: for we will not set down (to the feast) till he come hither.'

Jesse therefore sent and brought him in: a goodly youth he was to look at, of a ruddy complexion, and beautiful countenance. And as soon as he was come

in, the Lord said to Samuel, 'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.' Samuel then taking the horn of oil, anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And from that day forward the spirit of the Lord came upon David: but the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul; and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled and terrified him: for all spirits, evil as well as good, are at God's command.*

Now when Saul's servants saw how he was vexed with that evil spirit, they told him that if, when the evil spirit from God was upon him, he had a skilful harper to play before him with his harp, he should be well; or have ease; and therefore they desired him to give order that they might seek out such a man. Which he consenting to, one of them told him he had seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who was cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, a man of war, prudent in matters, and a comely person, and withall that the Lord was with him.

Upon this recommendation, Saul sent messengers to Jesse, requiring him to send him David his son, who was with the sheep. Whereupon Jesse, lading an ass with bread, and a bottle of wine and a kid, sent them as a present by David to Saul. And thenceforward, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took an harp, and playing upon it, so refreshed Saul, that the evil spirit departed from him, and he was well.

This procured David great love from Saul, so that he was loth to part with him. And therefore he sent to Jesse, saying, 'Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.' And he made David his armour-bearer.

By this time the Philistines, having rallied their scattered troops, and recruited their forces, drew forth their armies again, to repair their former losses and dishonour, and revenge themselves upon the Israelites. And marching to Shochoh, which belonged to Judah, they pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in

the coast of Dammim. Whereupon Saul drew forth his forces also, and encamped by the valley of Elab, or the oak: so that the Philistines' camp was planted upon one mountain, and the Israelites' camp upon another, having a valley between them, 1 Sam. xvii.

While thus the two armies stood facing each other, there sallied forth of the Philistines' camp a champion, of prodigious stature, whose name was Goliath, and he was of Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. Which, taking the measure here by the common cubit, which, in Deut. iii. 11, is called the cubit of a man, and is generally held to contain half a yard, renders him three yards, or nine feet high, and a span, which some make to be twelve inches.

He is a tall man reckoned now a days, that measures two yards, or six feet: but Goliath was half so much more, and a span over. And yet, if we may guess at the stature of Og king of Bashan, from the dimensions of his iron bedstead, which was nine cubits, that is, four yards and a half, or thirteen feet and an half long, Deut. iii. 11, he seems to have been a greater monster than this.

Proportionable to his height, we may suppose the giant's bulk and strength to be, by the weight of his armour. For besides an helmet of brass, he was armed in a coat of mail; the weight whereof was five thousand shekels of brass: which, in a marginal note to one of our English bibles, is computed to be an hundred fifty and six pounds and four ounces. His legs were guarded with greaves, or boots of brass: and for defence of his neck, he had a target of brass between his shoulders. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam for bigness; and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron: which, in the book before mentioned, is computed to be eighteen pounds and three quarters of a pound. So that his bare armour was enough to overload an ordinary horse.

Thus accoutered, and having his esquire to bear his shield before him, he advanced within hearing of the

Israelitish host ; and then making a stand, thus made his defiance to the armies of Israel :

‘ Why, said he, are you come out to set your battle in array ? Am not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul ? Choose ye a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants ; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then ye shall be our servants.’ And the more to provoke the Israelites, he insultingly added ; ‘ I defy the armies of Israel this day : give me a man, that we may fight together.’ Thus continuing to do, both morning and evening, for forty days together, he put Saul, and all Israel that heard him, into a very great fear : for in all the host of Israel there was not a man found that would accept the challenge.

When therefore neither king Saul, nor any of his warriors, durst encounter this Philistine, God brings forth his champion, little David, so lately and privately anointed for the kingdom.

David’s three eldest brothers served at that time in the army under Saul ; and David, who was the youngest son, and looked after the sheep, used to go to and fro between his father’s house and the camp, to visit his brethren, and supply them with necessaries. And God so ordered it at this time, that on the last of those forty days, whereon the Philistine came forth to defy Israel, David should come to the camp.

For Jesse, the night before, having appointed his son David to carry some provisions to his brethren, with a present to their colonel, and bring him word how they did, David, getting up betimes in the morning, and leaving his sheep with an under keeper, came to the trench of the camp, just as the host, going forth to the field, shouted for the signal of the battle : for Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

David therefore, leaving his provisions with the keeper of the carriages, ran into the army to salute his brethren : and as he stood talking with them, be-

hold there came up the Philistines' champion, Goliath of Gath, out of the armies of the Philistines, and gave the same defiance, in David's hearing, that he had used to give before.

At sight of this grim warrior the men of Israel were so terrified, that in great fear they fled from him; and said one to another, 'Have ye seen this man that is come up? Surely to defy Israel is he come.' But the king hath declared, that whosoever will accept his challenge, and shall have the good success to kill him, he will greatly enrich that man, and will not only give him his daughter to wife, but will also make his father's house free in Israel from all public payments and taxes.

This David over-hearing, and being willing to understand it more thoroughly, asked some of them that stood by him, what should be done to the man that should be so happy as to kill this daring Philistine, and thereby take away the reproach of his defiance from Israel. And in his zeal for the honour of God, and his contempt of the great lubber, he added, 'For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should be thus suffered to defy the armies of the living God?' Whereupon some of the people repeated to him what terms the king had proposed to the victor.

But Eliab, David's eldest brother, hearing him speak thus to the people, was angry with David, to whom, perhaps, he bore less good will, since the time that Samuel the prophet, setting him aside, had sent for David from the sheep-cotes, and preferred him before him. And not containing himself, asked him in an upbraiding manner, why he came down thither neglecting his business at home? and with whom he had left those few sheep in the wilderness? 'I know, said he, the pride and naughtiness of thy heart: for thou art come down now to see the battle.'

This was a churlish rebuke for a brother, and an ill return for David's kindness in coming to see him, and to bring him provisions. But David put it gently by, only saying, 'What have I done? Had I not cause

enough to come,' when my father sent me? And to avoid any appearance of quarrelling with his brother, he turned from him, and discoursing with another, after the same manner he had done before, manifested a courageous zeal for God, and an high contempt of that vaunting enemy.

It was not long, ere David's words were rehearsed before Saul, who thereupon sent for him. And when David was come into Saul's presence, he with a settled courage said, 'Let no man's heart fail because of this Philistine: for I thy servant will go fight with him.' Alas! said Saul, thou art not a fit match for him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

David thereupon recounted to Saul what he, youth as he was, had already atchieved. 'Thy servant, said he, kept his father's sheep; and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by the beard, and smiting him slew him; thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. For the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.'

The brave resolution which appeared in David, cheered up Saul a little; so that he said to David, 'Go, and the Lord be with thee.' And to make his little champion look as much like a warrior as he could, he armed David with his own armour, putting an helmet of brass upon his head, and a coat of mail upon his body. Upon which when David had girded his sword, and walked a turn or two about, to try how he could wield his arms, he soon found they would not do, and told Saul he could not go with those: 'For, said he, I have not proved them.' They might, perhaps, be armour of proof; and being the king's, for his own wear, probably were so: but they were not of

proof to David. Nor need any wonder that David could not go in Saul's armour, if they consider David as a little stripling, and Saul a lusty man, taller by the head and shoulders than any of the people.

David therefore, putting off Saul's armour again, took his staff (probably his sheep-hook) in one hand, and his sling in the other; and having his shepherd's bag or scrip by his side, he chose five smooth stones of the valley, and put them into it.

Thus furnished, he advanced towards the Philistine; who seeing somebody come out from the Israelitish army, began to move towards him, his armour-bearer carrying his shield before.

But when he was come so near that he could discern it was but a youth, of a maidenly countenance and unarmed, that came out against him; and taking it for a mark of contempt upon him, that such an one should offer him the combat, he, in great disdain asked him, 'Am I a dog that thou comest to me with stones?' Then cursing him by his gods, he said to David, 'Come but within my reach, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.'

David, nothing daunted with that bold threat, made him this no less bold return:

'Thou comest to me trusting in thine own strength, being furnished with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee: and I will give (not thy carcass only, but) the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the inhabitants of the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with the sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into their hands.'

With this nettling answer enraged, the Philistine came on to assail David. Who as much in courage

above him, as in stature below him, ran forward to meet the Philistine. And having, upon the Philistine's first motion, taken a stone out of his bag, and fitted it to his sling, he let fly at the Philistine with that force that (the God of Israel whom he had defied, both strengthening David's arm, and guiding the stone) he smote the Philistine in the forehead; and the stone sinking into his head, down fell Goliath flat upon his face. Whereupon David, hasting to him, leaped up upon him: and having no sword of his own, drew out the Philistine's sword; and therewith slew him, and cut off his head.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and Judah standing ready in arms, gave a shout; and pursuing the Philistines through the valley, to the very gates of Ekron, gave them a very great slaughter and overthrow: and then returning from the chase, took the spoil of the Philistines' tents.

David, in his return from the slaughter of Goliath, was met by Abner, the general of Saul's host, and by him conducted to Saul, with the Philistine's head in his hand; and Saul asking him, 'Whose son art thou, young man?' David answered, 'I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite;' for Saul it seems, when David went forth against the Philistines, had inquired of Abner whose son he was, and Abner could not tell him.

Hence a doubtful question arises concerning the time when this duel was fought. For since we read in chap. xvi. 19, (before this account of the Philistine's defiance) that Saul sent for David, and that David came to him, played on his harp before him, grew into his favour, and was made his armour-bearer, ver. 21, 22; it is much that neither Saul nor Abner should remember nor know him, when he came to offer himself to the combat. This hath made some think that this combat was fought before the time that David was sent to play before Saul. To which the character given of David by Saul's servants, when they recom-

mended him, not only for a skilful player, but a mighty valiant man, a man of war, and that the Lord was with him, ver. 18, seems to give some countenance. But on the other hand, as it may not be supposed that this encounter with Goliath happened before David had been anointed by Samuel; so, since the spirit of the Lord, upon that anointing of David, came immediately upon him from that day forward, ver. 13, it is reasonable to conclude, that from that very time the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and that from the very same time the evil spirit vexed him; and that very soon after Saul's servants, perceiving him to be troubled, recommended David to him; and that upon David's playing before him, the evil spirit had left Saul, and he was grown well, ver. 23, before the Philistines made this invasion upon him. And the character Saul's servants gave of David's valour might well enough arise from his bold and brave undertaking, in encountering and killing the lion and the bear, in defence of his flock; which though Saul had not, yet some of his servants might likely enough have heard of, and from thence infer, the Lord was with him. Besides we read, that David went and returned from Saul, to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem, chap. xvii. 15. And since we never read of his going to Saul, but upon that occasion when the evil spirit troubled him, and this when he went to fight the Philistines, it is most likely his going to Saul there mentioned, ver. 15, was when Saul was troubled; and his returning from Saul to his sheep again, was after the evil spirit had left Saul. For after David had slain the Philistine, Saul, it is said, took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house, but set him over the men of war, chap. xviii. 2, 5. So that if this duel had been before his playing to Saul, there had been no need to have sent for David to play before him, for he then had him with him. But leaving this to the reader's consideration and judgment, let us go on with the story.

David, it seems, after he had presented Goliath's head to king Saul, brought it to Jerusalem: but whether

then, or some time after, and how long, is also uncertain. The giant's armour he laid up in his tent. Only the sword, wherewith he cut his head off, seems to have been dedicated to the Lord, and delivered to the priest to keep, as a monument of the victory, and of Israel's deliverance.

Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul, was present when Abner brought David to his father, with Goliath's head in his hand. And being himself a man of great valour, as his own late bold attempt upon the Philistines' garrison, chap. xiv, shewed, was so taken with David's courage and conduct in this engagement, that he contracted a firm friendship with him ; which grew in time so close, that to express the strictness of it, it is said, ' The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David ;' and that Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And having thus made a mutual covenant of lasting kindness between them, the young prince, stripping himself of the robe that was upon him, gave it to David, with other of his garments, even to his sword, his belt, and his bow.

Thus went all things smooth and prosperous with David for a while. But long it held not. For Saul, not suffering David to go back to live with his father any more, set him over the men of war. In which post he behaved himself so wisely, in all the expeditions Saul sent him upon, that not the common people only, but the courtiers also, did very much favour and commend him.

This made Saul uneasy, and that which increased his uneasiness was, he called to mind, that when David returned from the Philistine, and he with his army from the chace, the women of Israel came out of the cities to meet Saul, singing and dancing, and playing on tabrets and other instruments of music, for joy of the victory ; and in their songs, as they played, they said, ' Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.'

This their attributing more to David, than to him, Saul took notice of, and resented as very ill ; saying, ' They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and

to me they have ascribed but thousands : and what can he have, than the people's favour, but the kingdom.' And being naturally a jealous prince, and of nothing more than his scepter ; and of that too more since Samuel had told him the Lord had rejected him, and given the kingdom to another : he had a watchful eye over David from this day forward, to do him mischief.

Nor was it long before he attempted it. For the next day, the evil spirit, that had troubled Saul before, entered him again ; acting on him in a sort of prophetic manner, in imitation of the true prophets : so that David was obliged to stand and play on his harp before him, as he had formerly done. And Saul, having a javelin in his hand, thought this a seasonable opportunity to strike David through with it ; and thereupon, without more ado, cast the javelin at him ; but David, being nimble, slipt aside ; and escaping the blow, avoided his presence, 1 Sam. xviii.

Now was Saul afraid of David in earnest ; having given him this just provocation, and being sensible that the Lord was with David, and was departed from himself. Wherefore he removed David from attending on his person : and to expose him to the greater danger, as well as to degrade him from his higher office of generalship, he made him a colonel or captain over a thousand only. In which station David behaved himself with so much prudence and good conduct, that it was still more evident the Lord was with him : which made the people, both Israel and Judah, caress him highly. But the more they loved him, the more Saul hated him, and sought his destruction.

David, by the law of arms, might have claimed one of Saul's daughters, that being part of the reward promised to him that should kill Goliath. But neither was David ambitious of the honour of marrying the king's daughter, nor Saul regardful to perform his word, till it came into his mind, that the bestowing his daughter on David might be a likely means to bring him to his end.

Wherefore having already, with his own hand, attempted his life, but failed, and thinking it would look better if he fell by the hand of the Philistines, than by his, he offered him his elder daughter Merab; telling him he would give him her to wife, without any other condition, than that he should exercise his valour in fighting the Lord's battles.

That he had done before in encountering and killing Goliath; whereby he fairly won the princely dame, and ought not to have had any future conditions put upon him, of fighting for her again. But David, not objecting that, as rather coveting, than shunning, opportunities of shewing his valour, modestly excused himself; representing to Saul the lowness of his family, and meanness of his condition, rendering him unfit for so great advancement. But he might have spared his excuse; for fickle Saul soon changed his mind; and instead of giving his daughter Merab to David, gave her to Adriel the Meholathite, the son of Barzillai. And David might be glad he missed her, if her nature answered her name, which signifies both chiding and fighting.

But Saul had another daughter, named Michal, who, it seems, was in love with David. Which when Saul was made acquainted with, he was glad of it; and said, 'Well, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.' Wherefore Saul told him, that though Merab was disposed of, he should have Michal, for he should be his son-in-law in one of the twain.

And because he had found David backward, he instructed his servants to discourse with him, as of themselves, and to inculcate to him what great delight the king took in him, and how much all the courtiers loved him: and from thence take occasion to persuade him to lay hold of so fair an offer of being the king's son-in-law.

What delight the king took in him, David might pretty well understand, by his casting his javelin at him. But that perhaps might be somewhat excused,

as the effect of a phrenetic fit, when the evil spirit was upon him.

Saul's servants, willing to please their master, whose secret design it is probable they might not know, and withall desirous of David's promotion, spared not to set forth the honour and advantages of this match; and to use their rhetoric to persuade David to it.

But David wished them to consider, that it was not a light matter for one of his rank and condition to be the king's son-in-law. For it being the custom of those times for men (not as now, to receive portions with their wives, but) to give doweries for their wives, whence could they suppose he should be able to raise a dowery befitting a king's daughter?

When they had reported this to Saul, he bid them tell David that he did not regard a dowery: only for the exercise of his valour, and that the king might be revenged of his enemies, he should bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines. This Saul proposed to excite David's courage, and engage him in some dangerous exploits, in hopes that he might fall by the hands of the Philistines.

These unexpected terms did so well suit with David's martial temper, that seeing he might have a fair young princess to his wife, for only doing that which, without any such condition, he would for its own sake gladly have undertaken, he joyfully embraced the offer. And that he might not be served in this, as he had been in the offer of the other daughter, he resolved there should be no delay on his part. Wherefore making an incursion upon the Philistines within the time prescribed by Saul, he slew two hundred men of them, and delivering their foreskins to the king by tale, gave him a double dowery for his daughter, that he might be his son-in-law: which of right he should have been without this, for his killing Goliath.

Though this was not a welcome present to Saul, who had rather David's head had been brought him, yet having engaged himself so far in the promise of his daughter, and probably hoping that by her he might

afterwards find means to work his ruin, he gave him his daughter Michal to wife.

By this alliance raised to an higher pitch of honour, David sought all occasions to signalize his virtue and valour. So that upon the next engagement with the Philistines, he behaved himself so bravely, and shewed such admirable courage and conduct, that he eminently excelled all the servants of Saul, and did thereby not a little endear himself to the people.

But still the more the people favoured him, the more did Saul both fear and hate him. And being now well assured that the Lord was with him, and finding also that Michal his wife did entirely love him, which put him out of hopes of working her into his designs against him, he conceived such mortal enmity towards him, that not able longer to contain it within his own breast, he openly gave charge both to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

But so far was Jonathan from entertaining a thought of killing David his bosom friend, and now his brother, whom he took so great delight in, that fearing lest any of his father's guards, frighted with threats, or tempted with hope of rewards, might surprize David, and kill or hurt him, he gave him notice of the danger he was in, advised and desired him to take care of himself, and keep out of the way in some private place, where he might be safe until the morning; assuring him that he, in the mean time, would take an occasion to discourse with the king his father concerning him, and would give him an account how he found things.

Accordingly Jonathan, falling into communication with his father, took an occasion to commend David to him, and thus to mediate on his behalf, 1 Sam. xix.

‘Let not the king, said he, sin against his servant David, since he hath not sinned against thee, but hath served thee very faithfully. For he adventured his life, upon great disadvantages, and slew a Philistine: and the Lord by him wrought a great salvation for all

Israel. Thou thyself wast an eye witness of it, and didst rejoice in it. Wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, in slaying David without a cause?"

Whether through the mediation of Jonathan, Saul was really softened towards David for the present; or whether, lest he should wholly lose him, or by too high provocation drive him to some desperate attempt, he thought fit to dissemble his displeasure, that he might get him once more within his reach, and have one stroke more at him; he put on a milder countenance, and suffering himself to be prevailed on by his son, gave him assurance that David should not be slain; confirming it to him by a solemn oath.

Whereupon Jonathan called for David; and having acquainted him how he had transacted the matter with his father, and what assurance Saul had given of his safety, he brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

But every occasion that raised David's fame renewed Saul's jealousy, and raised his displeasure to an higher pitch; the effects of which David soon found. For Saul being cast into another frantic fit, by the evil spirit that possessed him, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand, David was called to allay his passion, by playing with his hand upon his harp. Which opportunity Saul laying hold of, cast his javelin again at David; thinking therewith to have smitten him to the wall. But David, forewarned by former dangers, having a watchful eye upon the motion of Saul's hand, nimbly slipped aside, and so again escaped the javelin; which was thrown with so great force, that it pierced into the wall against which David had stood.

Hereupon immediately leaving the court, David retired to his own house, hoping he might have been safe there: but Saul sent some of his guards after him, with charge to watch the house all night, and slay him in the morning. Of which when Michal, David's

wife, had notice, she acquainted her husband with it ; telling him, if he did not provide for his safety that night, he would certainly be slain in the morning. She therefore, prevailing with him to make use of a contrivance of her's, let him down through a window ; and David, by the advantage of a dark night, escaped.

In the morning came they whom Saul had sent to kill David ; and asking for him, were answered by Michal that he was sick in bed : she thinking by that shift to have put them off, at least from too quick a pursuit after him. But when the guards returned with that answer to the king, he immediately dispatched them back again, with a strict charge to bring David in his bed to him, that he might slay him ; glad no doubt, that he was so sure of him.

But a great and very uneasy disappointment it was to him, when the messengers came again and told him, that having searched David's bed, they found nothing in it but an image, with a pillow of goat's hair for a bolster, which Michal had laid in the bed instead of her husband, who was fled and gone. And so highly was Saul displeased with his daughter Michal for putting this trick upon him, and letting her husband escape, whom he called his enemy, that she, to appease him, made him believe that her husband had threatened to kill her, if she would not let him go.

David meanwhile, treading bye paths, made his escape to Ramah, that he might pour out his complaints to his sure friend, the good old prophet Samuel : which having done, he and Samuel went and dwelt in Najoth, where was a school of the prophets : in which perhaps they might hope to be secure from any violence from Saul, out of respect at least to the place, which in those times obtained the privilege of a sanctuary.

But they did not yet thoroughly understand Saul. For no sooner was it told him that David was there, but he sent messengers thither to take him. Who when they came there, and saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing over them,

as one appointed to instruct them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied, or behaved themselves in the same manner as they saw the prophets do.

Saul, hearing how it fared with the first messengers, sent others on the same errand a second time, and a third. Which speeding all as the first did, he then went himself. And in the way thither the Spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on prophesying (which being a word of large signification, interpreters take in this place for singing of psalms, and hymns of thanksgivings and praise to God) till he came to the place where Samuel and David were. And being come thither, he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel; lying down naked that day and the next night.

This happening in the school and company of the prophets, into which, and amongst whom, none but good and virtuous men did use to enter, or were admitted; it gave occasion for that proverbial speech, used when an ill man thrusts himself into the company of good men, and endeavours to personate them, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'

Saul's being thus unexpectedly detained among the prophets, gave David fair opportunity to consult his own safety. Wherefore leaving Saul at Najoth, he speedily repaired to his true friend, prince Jonathan, who is supposed to be left as viceroy to his father, while he went to Najoth. And being come to Jonathan, he in an expostulatory manner opened to him the strait and danger he was in, saying, 'What have I done? What is mine iniquity? And what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?' 1 Sam. xx.

Jonathan, not apprehending his danger so great as it was, and willing to ease him of his fears, answered him, 'God forbid: thou shalt not die.' And to confirm him, added, 'My father will do nothing great or small, without acquainting me with it: and why should he hide this thing from me? Thou mayst be confident there is no such thing intended.'

David knew Saul better than his own son did ; and finding his former words had not prevailed upon Jonathan, to impress him with a due sense of his danger ; he now, to gain his belief, with a solemn oath assured him, that there was but a step between him and death ; but that his father certainly knowing he favoured him, would not let him know of it, that he might not be grieved at it.

This so earnest confidence in David made great impression on Jonathan ; so that he readily offered him his service, telling him, whatsoever his soul desired, he would do for him.

David thereupon taking boldness, said, ‘ To-morrow thou knowest is the new moon ; and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat : but since the power is now in thine hand (as deputy to thy father in his absence) give me leave to hide myself in the field until the third day night ; and if thy father inquire after me, tell him I asked leave of thee to go to Bethlehem my city, to the anniversary feast that is kept there for all my family. If thy father, when he hear it, shall say it is well, that shall be a token of peace to thy servant. But if he be very wroth, take it for a sure sign that evil to me is determined by him. And then, added he, seeing thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee, deal thou at least thus kindly with thy servant, that if there be iniquity in me, do thou thyself slay me : for why shouldest thou deliver me up to thy father, to be not only put to death, but ignominiously handled ?’

‘ Oh ! far from thee be that, said Jonathan : for if I certainly knew that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, dost thou think I would not tell thee ?’

‘ But who, replied David, shall tell me how thy father takes my absence ? or how shall I know if he answer thee roughly ?’

Jonathan thereupon inviting David to walk out with him into the field, when they were come to a place of privacy, he renewed his covenant with David before

the Lord God of Israel; whom he invoked to be a witness of it, and revenger of the breach thereof upon himself, if, when he should have sounded his father's mind concerning David, if he found him well disposed to him, he did not give him an account thereof, and if he found he had designed evil to him, he did not let him know it, and secure his escape, that under the favour of the Lord he might go in peace. These were the terms on Jonathan's part.

But that which he required of David was, that he should not only shew him the kindness of the Lord, during his own life, but that he should not cut off his kindness from Jonathan's house forever: no, not when the Lord should have cut off the enemies of David. For as Jonathan could not be ignorant what the prophet Samuel had denounced to Saul, concerning his rejection, and the renting of the kingdom from him, chap. xv. 28; so no doubt he had a full persuasion that the Lord would one day set David upon the throne of Israel.

Having thus confirmed their covenant by mutual oath (for Jonathan caused David to swear to him also) they began to concert the manner how this matter concerning David's safety should be managed. The result thereof was, that David, when he had absented himself three days, should go down to the place where he had hid himself before, chap. xix. 2, and should remain there under the hollow side of a great stone, called Ezel, which was a way-mark. 'And I, said Jonathan, will shoot three arrows on the side of the stone, as though I shot at a mark. And when I send my page to find the arrows, and bring them me again, If I say expressly to him, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou, for there is peace to thee, and no hurt as the Lord liveth. But if I say unto the young man, Behold the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way, for the Lord hath sent thee away. And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold the Lord be between me and

thee forever.' Thus they parted : and David according to this agreement withdrew and hid himself.

And now the new moon being come, and king Saul returned from Najoth to that solemn feast, and Jonathan having resigned his place to his father, king Saul set down to eat, as he used to do, in his seat by the wall, having Abner by his side, and David's seat was empty. Yet Saul said nothing of him that day : for he thought within himself, he is not clean ; something has befallen him, that has made him ceremonially unclean, so that he may not partake of this feast, according to the law, Levit. vii. 19, 20.

But when he found his seat empty again next day, he asked Jonathan (who he knew was his confidant) 'Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?' So, being offended, he called him in contempt ; not vouchsafing to call him by his name, nor by the title of his office, much less his son-in-law.

Jonathan, to pacify his father, answered him (according to the agreement made between David and him) that David having received an invitation from his brother to their family feast at Bethlehem, had earnestly intreated him to give him leave to go thither.

Saul, it is probable, had designed David's death at that time ; and now finding himself disappointed by his son Jonathan, he was very angry with him. And suffering his rage to break forth into reviling language, called Jonathan a perverse rebel, or son of perverse rebellion, or, as some think, the more to gall him with an indecent reflection upon his mother, son of the perverse, rebellious woman : adding withall, 'Do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thy own confusion, and to the confusion of thy mother's nakedness ? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth on the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore send now, and fetch him unto me : for he shall surely die.'

This so rough and unusual language convinced Jonathan that David understood his father better than

he had hitherto done. Yet he could not forbear so far to advocate the cause of his friend and brother, as, in a gentle way of expostulation with his father, to ask him why David should be slain; or what he had done that could deserve death. But Saul enraged before, but now transported with unbridled fury, though he loved his son Jonathan very well, cast his javelin at him to have slain him: whereby Jonathan was thoroughly satisfied that his father had determined to slay David.

Though Jonathan, being a nimble active man, escaped without a wound in his body, yet not without a deep wound to his mind: for being a man of great courage, and high stomach, he could not brook this so great indignity. He was his father's eldest son, heir apparent to the crown, long since grown to an adult age, had signalized himself a man at arms, having atchieved great enterprizes in war, and but the other day had sat upon his father's throne, as his vice-gerent in his absence: and now to be so shamefully treated, and that too in so public an appearance, was more than he could bear, without shewing some resentment, though from a father and a king; or rather, perhaps, because from a father and a king. Wherefore filled with grief for David's danger, and with displeasure for the open shame done unto himself, he arose from table, and withdrew himself, in high discontent.

But not suffering his own concern to make him forgetful of his friend's, he went out next morning into the field, at the time appointed between him and David, taking only his page, a little lad, with him. And bidding the lad run, to find out the arrows which he should shoot, he shot an arrow beyond him: and when the lad was come to the place where the arrow was, Jonathan calling aloud after him, said, 'Is not the arrow beyond thee? Make speed and bring it; stay not.' Accordingly the lad, having gathered up the arrows, brought them to his master; who giving him the rest of the artillery, bid him carry them back into the city; which the lad did, not knowing any thing of the business.

By the shooting of the arrow beyond him, David knew his doom. And as soon as the lad was gone, coming out of the place where he lay hid, on the south side of the stone, he fell on his face to the ground, bowing himself three times. Then Jonathan and he embracing and kissing each other, wept one over the other, until David exceeded.

But time not permitting delay, Jonathan said to David, 'Go, in peace: and let what we have both of us sworn in the name of the Lord God, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever, be kept inviolable by us.' Whereupon David arose and departed, and Jonathan returned into the city.

David, now finding his case desperate, directed his course to Nob, a city of the priests, that Ahimelech the priest might inquire of the Lord for him. But as soon as Ahimelech, who knew him to be the king's son-in-law, a man in chief place, and ordinarily well attended, but knew not that he was out of favour with the king, saw him coming without any attendance at all, he was afraid something was amiss; and asked how it came to pass that he was come alone.

David considering his own circumstances, and how vindictive Saul was, and not willing the priest should come into trouble for entertaining him, thought it not adviseable to open his condition to him, but leave him room to defend himself by his ignorance thereof, if he should happen to be called to account.

Wherefore he pretended to Ahimelech, that the king had sent him upon a secret expedition, with strict charge not to let any body know of it. For which reason it was that he was come in that private manner, having appointed his servants to attend him at such a place. But that having through haste made no provision for the journey, he was destitute of necessaries for himself and his men; and therefore desired, if he had any bread to spare him some, 1 Sam. xxi.

The priest answered, that he had not any common bread. But he had some hallowed bread, such as was then called shew bread, from its being shewed, or set

in two rows six loaves in a row, upon the table, before the Lord; which being shifted or changed every sabbath day, the priest, when he set on new, took the old bread for his own eating, according to the law, Levit. xxiv. 5 to 10. But because this sort of bread was for the priests' eating only, who were hallowed also, as well as the bread, and were supposed to be clean, the priest asked David, if his servants had kept themselves from pollutions, at least from women: which David assuring him they had, and withall urging, that the bread was in a manner common, seeing there was other hallowed that day in its room, the priest gave him of the hallowed bread.

But bread was not all that David wanted. Being let down through the window in haste and fear, he took with him neither sword nor spear; the want of which he imputed also to the urgent haste of the king's business, which would not permit him to stay to take his arms with him; and therefore if the priest had any spear or sword by him, he desired that he would let him have it. The priest told him there was the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom he slew in the valley of Elah, which lay wrapped up in a cloth behind the ephod: if he would have that, he might take it; but there was no other. Ay, that to choose, said David, for there is none like it.

Now who should happen to be present at this interview between David and Ahimelech, to be an eye and ear witness of what passed between them, but Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief herdsman; who, being detained before the Lord, whether by vow, or by reason of the sabbath, or what other occasion is uncertain, was there that day. And probably it was because of him, that David feigned that story to the priest of his being sent by the king; that if, which was but too likely, and which David suspected, Doeg should turn informer, the priest might have the king's name and authority to plead, in his own justification, for having thus friendly entertained David.

As for David, having got some sustenance to refresh him, and Goliath's sword to defend himself

with, and not knowing where he could be safe in any part of Saul's dominions, he fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish, the Philistine king of Gath.

But whether the sword betrayed him, or any of the Philistines knew him, king Achish's servants soon discovered who he was; and said unto Achish, 'Is not this David, the king of the land? Is not this he of whom they sang in dances, Saul had slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?' 1 Sam. xxii.

This put David in great fear, and made him wish himself safe out of Achish's hands again: and that he might facilitate his escape, he changed his behaviour before them; and feigning himself mad, scribbled on the doors of the gates, and let his spittle drivel down upon his beard. Which the king taking notice of, said to his servants, 'Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him unto me? Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?'

This gave David an opportunity to get from Gath, and make his escape to Adullam. Where probably, after he had made his escape, rather than amongst his enemies in Gath, he composed those two psalms, the twenty-fourth and fifty-sixth. †

The town of Adullam, in the cave belonging to which David was hid, being in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 25, and not far from Bethlehem, gave ready means to David's relations, and all his father's family, to go down thither to him, as soon as they heard he was there.

Thither also gathered unto him all that were in distress, and every one that was in debt, and all the malecontents, to the number of about four hundred men, who made him their captain.

But David considering well that it could not be long before Saul would hear of his little army, and be upon him with a greater; and having a pious care for his father and mother, cast with himself, where, in these troublesome times, he might find a place of safety for them: and Moab being then an enemy to Saul, made

him the rather hope for succour there. Wherefore going to Mizpeh of Moab, he intreated the king of Moab to let his aged parents come thither, and remain there, and he should see how God would be pleased to dispose of his affairs. And having obtained leave, he brought them before the king of Moab; and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold. But that probably was not long: for the prophet Gad, of whom this is the first mention, came to David, and warned him not to abide in the hold, which probably was some place of security that the Moabitish king had assigned him, but depart, and get him again into the land of Judah. Whereupon David leaving Moab, went into the forest of Hareth.

Saul meanwhile abode in Gibeah, under a grove of trees in Ramah; having, as his manner was, his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him. And having newly heard that David was discovered, and that he had raised forces, he thus upbraidingly spoke unto his servants that attended him:

‘Hear now, ye Benjamites (ye who are of my own tribe and family) will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you captains of thousands and of hundreds, that all of you have conspired against me: and there is none of you that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse; and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son had stirred up my servants against me to lie in wait, as at this day?’ For Saul, it seems, having heard that David had levied an army, and remembering that his son Jonathan had left him in displeasure, upon the despite he did unto him, when he threw his javelin at him, chap. xx. 33, suspected that they had conspired against him, to dethrone him at least.

When Saul had done speaking, and all the rest of Saul’s servants were innocently silent, out steps Doeg the Edomite, and says, ‘I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub: and he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and also the sword of Goliath the Philistine.’

Upon this information, Saul sent for Ahimelech the priest and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob, to come and appear before him : who, obeying the summons, readily came and presented themselves to the king. And when Saul saw Ahimelech ; ' Hear now, said he to him, thou son of Ahitub : Why have ~~thou~~ conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in ~~that~~ thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day ?'

Ahimelech, either not knowing, or not willing to take notice that David was out of favour with the king, answered him thus, ' And who is faithful among all thy servants, as David, who is only the king's son-in-law : but goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thy house ?' As much as to say, How could I do less than entertain and accommodate a person so honourable, and so high in favour with my prince : especially when he came in thy name, and was going, as he told me, upon some especial service of thine ? And as to my inquiring of the Lord for him, which is the proper office of my priesthood, did I then begin ? Have I not often inquired of the Lord for him before ? Why then am I questioned for it more now than formerly ? As for conspiring against thee, far be it from me. ' Let not the king impute any such thing unto thy servant : nor unto any of the house of my father ; for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.'

So fair a plea, before a fair judge, had been a sufficient defence for him that made it. But this angry monarch, whose will was his law, and whose law was absolute, hastily replied, ' Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house.' And it being now come to that pass, that it was no more with him but a word and a blow, he said to his foot-guards that stood about him, ' Turn and slay the priests of the Lord ; because their hand also is with David : and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me.'

A sentence so unjust and barbarous, astonished the guards, so that not a man of them would put forth an hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.

Then said the king to Doeg, 'Turn thou, and fall upon the priests.' He, an Edomite and brutish herdsman, never stuck at it: but straightway falling upon the priests, slew of them four score and five persons, that did wear a linen ephod.*

Such a stream of innocent blood had been enough, one would have thought, to have glutted the revenge of the most blood thirsty tyrant. But Saul, not satisfied with this, caused Nob, the city of the priests, to be smitten with the edge of the sword, and the inhabitants, both men and women, children and sucklings, together with the very cattle, oxen, asses and sheep, to be cut off, and utterly extinguished.

This execution upon the priests, though extremely unjust, cruel, and inhuman in Saul, was yet just from God; being the completing of that judgment denounced long before by God against Eli and his house.

Of all that belonged to Ahimelech, but one escaped this slaughter: a young son of his named Abiathar; who by the providence of God, slipping away, fled to David, who was now at Keilah, defending that town against the Philistines.

There he gave David a lamentable account of the Lord's priests. Which though David did greatly lament, as looking upon himself to be the innocent occasion of it, by his going to Nob, yet he was the less surprized at it, because he had observed that Doeg was there at that time; and had then a sense that Doeg would inform Saul of all that passed between Ahimelech and him; which in likelihood was the reason he pretended to be sent by the king; that Ahimelech, if examined, might alledge it in his defence.

As for Abiathar, to cheer him up as well as he could, he wished him to consider that they were both in the same case and danger; and therefore invited him to abide with him, bidding him not to be afraid, for he would protect him in safety.

* A. M. 2722.

This treachery of Doeg, and cruelty of Saul upon the priests, gave occasion to David to compose the fifty-second psalm.

While Saul had been thus imbruing his hands in innocent blood, David had employed his arms in the just defence of his country. For being advertised that the Philistines had made an incursion upon Keilah, a city of Judah, to forage the country thereabouts, and that they were robbing the threshing floors, he considered of what importance it might be, both to his reputation and interest, to protect the people, and secure the provisions ; which might be a supply to his own men afterwards, 1 Sam. xxiii.

Yet having a regardful eye to God, he would not attempt so hazardous an undertaking, without consulting the Lord. Wherefore having the prophet Gad with him, chap. xxii. 5, he inquired of the Lord whether he should go and smite the Philistines, or no. And the Lord bid him, Go smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. But when he had imparted this to his men, they began to shrug and draw back ; alledging that they lived in fear while they were there, in the midst of Judah, among their own neighbours and friends ; and how much more then would fear prevail over them if they should go to Keilah, a remote town upon the border of the tribe, there to engage against the army of the Philistines, and perhaps have Saul, with all his forces, at their back.

David therefore, to encourage his men, inquired of the Lord again ; and the Lord bid him arise, go down to Keilah : ' For I, said he, will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.'

By this second answer confirmed, David and his men went to Keilah, and fighting with the Philistines smote them with a great slaughter : whereby he both saved the inhabitants from rapine and death, and brought to Keilah a booty of cattle, which he took from the Philistines.

Such an exploit as this could not long be kept from Saul. Who, when he heard it, pleased himself, not

so much that his enemies the Philistines were beaten, and a good town of his defended and saved, as with a conceit, that now God had delivered David into his hand. For by entering a town that had gates and bars, he conceived David was now shut in, and that the Keilites would keep him fast. Wherefore calling all his people together, he resolved to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men there.

David had so good intelligence, that he knew Saul's design against him. And being doubtful whether the Keilites, notwithstanding the benefit they had so newly received by him, would be true to him, or no, and consequently whether it were safe for him to stay there, or no, he resolved to cast himself upon the Lord for direction. Wherefore calling the young priest Abiathar, who, being newly come, had brought an ephod with him, he bid him bring the ephod to him, that he might thereby inquire of the Lord.

Which being brought, David said, 'O Lord God of Israel thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake: will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee tell thy servant.' And the Lord said, 'He will come down.'

Then said David, 'Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?' And the Lord said, 'They will deliver thee up.' Upon this, David drew out his men, which were now increased to about six hundred; and marching out of Keilah, they went to seek their safety where they could. The report whereof being brought to court, stopped Saul from pursuing him at that time.

But Jonathan having notice that David was in a wood, in the wilderness of Ziph, went privately to him there, and encouraged him, bidding him not fear, for the Lord would not suffer him to fall into the hand of Saul. 'But thou, said he, shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee (so he pleased and deceived himself); and that my father knows, which makes him so uneasy. Then having renewed and

confirmed their covenant before the Lord, Jonathan returned home, leaving David in the wood: where he is thought to have composed the sixty-third psalm. //

He had not long been in the wilderness of Ziph, ere the officious Ziphites, to curry favour with their king, went and informed Saul that David was retired into the strong holds in their woods; inviting him to come down with his army, and they would deliver up David into his hands.

The crafty king, thanking them for their kindness and commending their loyalty, desired them to return, and inform themselves more thoroughly of David's haunts, and take good notice of his lurking places, and come to him again with a more exact and certain account: and then, said he, I will go with you; and if he be in the land, I will fetch him out, through all the thousands of Judah.

The Ziphites thereupon returned. And David, having got notice of their treachery, shifting his quarters, went into the wilderness of Maon: whither Saul, upon advice of his removal, followed him.

And now was David in a very great strait: for so near was Saul got to him, that David with his men were on the one side of the mountain, and Saul on the other side of the same mountain with his host. And as David made what haste he could to draw off his men for fear of Saul, so Saul, having by much the greater numbers, endeavoured to encompass David and his men round about, that he might take them; and there seemed in the eye of human reason no way for David to escape.

But in the greatest danger the Lord sent help. For on a sudden the messenger came in post haste, to acquaint Saul that the Philistines had invaded the land on the other side, and to desire him to bring back his forces to repress them with all speed.

Thus God sometimes delivers his people, by raising up enemies against their enemies. And thus, for this time, David escaped. For Saul drawing off his army to go against the Philistines, David went up from

thence, and sat down in the strong holds of En-gedi: and there, it is probable at least, on this occasion, he composed the fifty-fourth psalm.

As soon as Saul had repelled the Philistines, hearing that David was removed to En-gedi, he took three thousand choice men out of all Israel, and went forth to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats, the highest and most craggy places of the country. And on his way, seeing a cave, he went into it to ease nature, little thinking that David was so near him; who, with some of his men, was lodged on the sides of that cave, 1 Sam. xxiv.

Well may we suppose that the sight of Saul, not knowing at the first upon what occasion he came in, put David into great fear. Which made him betake himself to God for help in prayer; which, being afterward committed to writing, hath the place of the hundred and forty-second psalm.*

David's men, when they saw Saul come in alone, thought this a fit opportunity to put an end to their troubles. And therefore they put him in mind, that this was the day, of which the Lord had said unto him (but when or where doth not appear), Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee (or, as if his providence, in bringing Saul thus within his reach, did so speak). Intimating thereby, that now Saul lying at his mercy, he might easily cut him off, and rid himself of so potent and implacable an enemy. Not considering that Saul had three thousand armed men at his heels, ready to have revenged that act upon them, and to have cut them all off for it.

But David, who, besides that danger, moved upon another principle, answered, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed.'

With these words David restrained his servants; not suffering them to rise against Saul. But he him-

self, going softly to the place where Saul had left his robe (when, to accommodate himself to the occasion, it is probable he had put it off, and laid it by) privily cut off the skirt of the robe; which yet he had no sooner done, but his heart smote him for doing it, as judging it too bold and disrespectful carriage towards his sovereign.

And when Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way, David, following him out of the cave, got into a place of advantage for safety; and then calling unto Saul, said, 'My lord the king!' Upon which unexpected voice Saul looking back, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowing, thus addressed himself to him:

'Wherefore hearest thou men's words, that say David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave, where some advised me to kill thee: but mine eye spared thee, and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, my father (for so I will presume to call thee, though thou wilt not vouchsafe to call me son) see and take good notice of the skirt of thy robe in mine hand; for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and yet did not kill thee, thou mayst thereby see and know that there is neither evil nor transgression in my hand, and that I have not sinned against thee; and yet thou huntest my life to take it. The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but mine hand shall not be upon thee. As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; but mine hand shall not be upon thee. After whom, continued he, is the king of Israel come forth? After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog? After a flea? for so, to shame Saul, he debased himself, in comparison of so great a king and so great a host. And added, 'The Lord therefore be judge between thee and me, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.'

Saul listened attentively unto David's words, until he had done speaking; and his evil nature being, for

the present, bound down, by the sense of David's kindness to him, he cried out, 'Is this thy voice, my son David?' And with that he brake forth into loud weeping. And as soon as that fit of passion was over, so that he had recovered his speech, he made this ample acknowledgment to David:

'Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good; whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast shewed this day that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou didst not kill me. For if any man find his enemy, at an advantage, will he let him go safe away? Wherefore the Lord reward thee good, for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, added Saul, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Therefore swear now unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.'

David thereupon, willing to make Saul as easy as he could, did swear unto him, as he desired. Which wrought so far at that time on Saul, that leaving any further pursuit of David, he returned home. But David, not thinking it safe to trust to fair words, gat him up with his men unto the hold: where he is thought to have written the fifty-seventh psalm.

About this time the prophet Samuel dying, the Israelites were generally gathered together to lament his death, and to bury him amongst his own family at Ramah. And such great and solemn funerals usually taking up long time, David got thereby some respite from his pursuers. In which time, leaving Engedi, he went down to the wilderness of Paran, not far from Maon; where he had been before, chap. xxiii, xxiv.

In Maon, which signifies a place of offence, there dwelt a very great and wealthy man, whose name was Nabal, of the posterity of Caleb; a man of a churlish nature, and very ill conditioned. But his wife, whose name was Abigail, which signifies the father's joy,

was not only a beautiful dame, but a woman of great discretion and virtue.

It was then sheep shearing time with Nabal. And he having three thousand sheep, must needs have many shearers, and could not but make large provisions for them. Besides it was the custom then, for relations and neighbours to come in at such a time, and feast together.

David hearing of this entertainment, and being probably in some strait for provisions for his soldiers, chose out ten young men, and bid them go to Nabal at Carmel, for there much of his possessions lay, and there he did shear his sheep, and salute him in his name. And thus, said he, shall ye say to him that lives in plenty; 'Peace be to thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace be to all that thou hast.' Then tell him from me, I have heard of his sheep shearing. And inasmuch as, while his shepherds were with us, we hurt them not, nor took any thing from them all the while they were in Carmel, as, said he, they will tell thee, if thou ask them, 'Let us therefore find favour in thine eyes; and since we come in a good time, give I pray thee, what comes to hand unto us thy servants, and to thy son David.'

This message the young men went and delivered to Nabal from their master David, and modestly waited his answer. But Nabal, according to his churlish nature, snapped them up, scornfully asking, 'Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? Then reflecting on David for having withdrawn himself from Saul; 'There are many servants, said he, in these days, that break away every one from his master: and shall I take my provisions that I have prepared for my shearers, and give them unto men whom I know not whence they be?'

David's young men, being modest beggars, were so daunted with this rugged repulse, that without replying, they turned away, and went back to David with this answer. At which David was so enraged, that arming himself, and commanding his men to arm, he

took about four hundred with him, leaving the rest to guard his camp, and marched towards Carmel, with a resolution to revenge this affront upon Nabal. For he said to his men, 'Surely, in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missing of all that belonged to him; and he hath requited me evil for good.' Then, binding his word with a sort of imprecation, he threatened not to leave a man living of Nabal's family by the next morning. Thus went he on in a soldierly heat: but God, who had so often prevented his innocent blood from being shed, provided a means now to stop him from shedding the innocent blood of others.*

For one of Nabal's servants having heard how roughly his master had treated David's messengers, hasted to his mistress, and told her, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master, and he flew upon them with railing language. But indeed the men were very good unto us, and did us no harm; neither did we miss any thing, as long as we were conversant with them; but they were rather a defence to us, both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore take notice of it, and consider what thou wilt do in the case: for evil is determined against our master, and against all his house; and he is a man of such an ungoverned passion, and of so ill a temper, that one cannot speak to him.

When Abigail heard this, she staid not to consult her husband, but with all speed ordered her servants to take two hundred loaves of bread, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs.

The two bottles of wine would not bear proportion with the other parts of the present, nor answer the occasion, if they should be understood of such bottles as are now commonly used, whether of earth, stone, or glass. But in those eastern countries they used to

carry wine or water in leathern bags or sacks, made to hold liquid things ; which vessels they called (at least we translate them) bottles. Such were those the Gibeonites brought to Joshua's camp, which they said were worn out, rent or torn, in their pretended long journey, Josh. ix. 13. And of such it may be supposed our Saviour Christ spake, Mat. ix. 17, where in a marginal note, to that which is called the Bishop's Bible, bottles are explained by bags of leather or skin, wherein wine was carried on asses or camels. And of such bottles two might hold a suitable quantity of wine.

Having thus packed up this present, and laid it upon asses, she bid her servants go on before, herself following them. And as she with her train went down one hill, David with his men came down the other ; so that they met in the bottom. But she, not dismayed at the sight of so many armed men, who she knew were hastening to the destruction of her family, as soon as she saw David, she made haste to alight from her ass ; and falling on her face before him, bowed herself to the ground at his feet. This put David to a stand : and while he intently looked on her, she breaking forth abruptly, thus bespake him :

'Upon me, my lord, upon me, let this iniquity be, and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear thou the voice of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal ; for as is his name, so is he. Nabal, which signifies a fool, is his name, and folly is with him. But I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now, therefore, my lord, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand ; now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal. And now this present, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given to the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee forgive the trespass of thine handmaid ;

for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul. But the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God; and the souls of thine enemies shall he fling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And when the lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel, it shall be no grief unto thee, or offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast not shed blood causelessly, or that my lord hath not revenged himself. But when the Lord shall have dealt with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.'

This so soft and moving speech so pacified David, that he said to Abigail, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me! And blessed be thy advice? And blessed be thou who hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand! For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, who hath kept me back from hurting thee, if thou hadst not hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left a man unto Nabal by the morning light.'

Then receiving at her hand what she had brought him, he bid her return to her house in peace; assuring her that he accepted her person, and granted her petition.

When Abigail was come home, she found her husband kept open house, holding a feast like the feast of a king. But observing that he had drank too liberally, and made himself very drunk, she told him nothing of this business, until the morning that he had slept himself a little sober, and then she opened the whole matter to him. Which when he had heard, and considered the danger and folly his rudeness had run him into, his heart died within him, and he grew stupid as a stone; and so languishing for about ten days time, the Lord then smote him, that he died outright.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, the sense of the justice of God so affected him, that he cried out, 'Blessed be the Lord that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal; and hath kept me, his servant, from doing evil, in shedding blood; for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head.'

Afterwards calling to mind the comely personage of Abigail, and with what wisdom and discretion she had managed the business of her husband with him, David sent some of his chief servants to her, to acquaint her that he had a desire to take her to wife.

She, when she had heard their message, bowed herself with her face to the earth. And to shew how much she thought herself honoured by the offer, she (using an apostrophe as if he had been present, and she had spoken to him) said, 'Let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.'

Then, without more courtship, she hasted and arose; and riding on an ass, with five damsels to attend her, she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife: and David, having married also Abinoam of Jezreel, was now possessed at once of the brother's beauty, so Abinoam signified; and the father's joy, which is the meaning of Abigail.

But Michal, David's first wife, her father Saul had taken from him, and given her to Phalti, the son of Laish, who was of Gallim; a place in the tribe of Benjamin, not far from Gibeah, where Saul dwelt.

This had been a time of peace and rest to David; for Saul had been busied about burying Samuel. But that funeral being now over, and Saul returned to Gibeah, the officious Ziphites came to him again, and informed him, that David had hid himself in the hill Hachilah, before their wilderness.*

Upon this information, Saul went down, with three thousand chosen men of Israel, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph; and pitched his camp in the hill of Hachilah, 1 Sam. xxvi.

* A. M. 2925.

David abode in the wilderness, and sent forth spies, that he might understand whereabouts Saul lay. And having got certain information of the place, he went himself privately to make his observation of Saul's encamping. And having seen where Saul himself lay, in the midst of his carriages, and Abner, the son of Ner, captain of his host, with the people round about him, David returning to his company, asked Ahimelech the Hittite, and Abishai, Joab's brother, son of Zerviah, David's sister, which of them would go with him into the camp of Saul? His cousin Abishai offering to go, they went together into the camp by night, and found Saul sleeping within the trench, having his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster, and Abner, with the people, lying round about him; but either no centinels, or all fast asleep.

Fain would Abishai have taken this advantage to have slain Saul. And therefore urging to David that God had at that time delivered his enemy into his hand, he intreated him to let him smite Saul but once, and he would strike so home, that he should not need to repeat his blow.

But David would by no means suffer it; but strictly forbade him: asking him, 'Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?' That is (says the marginal note, in that which is called the Bishop's Bible) in his own private cause; for Jehu slew two kings at God's appointment, 2 Kings ix. 24, 27. Assuredly, said David, the Lord will smite him, or his day shall come for him to die, or he shall descend into battle, and perish; but God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. Yet, said he to Abishai, take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us be gone.*

So they took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster, and gat them away, so that no man saw them, nor knew they were there; neither did any of

* A. M. 2926.

the people awake, but all slept soundly: as well they might, for a deep sleep from the Lord was upon them.

But when David was got over to the other side to the top of an hill, at a fit distance, and out of danger, he called aloud to the people, and particularly to Abner the general: who not answering quickly, he called again more earnestly, saying, 'Answerest thou not, Abner?'

With that, Abner awaking, asked, 'Who art thou, that makest such a noise to disturb the king?' Then said David to Abner, 'Art thou not a valiant man? And who is like to thee in Israel? Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? For there came one into the camp, and might have destroyed the king thy lord. Thou hast not done well; but (by martial law) art worthy of death, thou, and the rest of you, because ye have not better guarded your master, the Lord's anointed. And for proof thereof, see now where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.'

This discourse, talked aloud, by reason of the distance, waked Saul indeed. Who hearing David's tongue, started up, and said, 'Is this thy voice, my son David?'

'Yes, my lord, O king, said David, it is my voice. But wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? For what have I done? Or, what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, said David, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering. But if they be the children of men that have done it, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord,' by forcing me to go to the uncircumcised for shelter: whereby they have, in effect, said, 'Go serve other gods. Now therefore let not my blood fall to the earth before the Lord; neither disgrace thyself by leading an army against so mean a man as I am: which is but as if a great

king should go forth with his host to seek a flea, or to hunt a partridge in the mountains.

Saul, overcome again, for the present, with David's generosity and kindness, cried out, 'I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do thee harm; because my life was precious in thine eyes this day. I confess I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.'

David then, holding out his spear, said, 'See, here is the king's spear; let one of the young men come over and fetch it: and the Lord reward every man his righteousness, and his faithfulness. For the Lord delivered thee into mine hand to-day: but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And as thy life was precious this day in my eyes; so may my life be precious in the eyes of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation.'

Saul, as setting a seal to David's wish, 'Blessed art thou, my son David:' and in a prophetic manner added, 'Thou shalt both do great things; and also shalt still prevail.' Then parting, David went on his way: and Saul, stopped in himself from pursuing him further at that time, returned home.

But though David had now escaped again, yet having no confidence in Saul's words, and finding the Ziphites treacherous to him, he began to be discouraged, and said in his heart, 'I shall yet one day perish by the hand of Saul,' meaning if I continue lurking in this manner. I conclude therefore, thought he, there is no better way for me to take, than speedily to convey myself into the land of the Philistines: so will Saul despair of finding me, and forbear to seek any farther after me, and so shall I escape his hands, 1 Sam. xxvii.

Wherefore having first obtained leave, and safe conduct, from Achish king of Gath, he went over with the six hundred men that were with him, and dwelt with Achish at Gath; he and his men, every man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail. And this succeeded according to his hope:

for when Saul understood whither he was gone, he gave over seeking after him.

But David, not liking to be pent up in Gath, and to be always under the eye and observation of the Philistine court, took an opportunity, in discourse with Achish, to say to him, 'If I have found favour in thy sight, let them give me a place in some country town, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?' Achish thereupon gave him Ziklag: which though Joshua had long before assigned to Judah, Josh. xv. 31, yet the Philistines had got, and kept it from them until now, and henceforward it belonged to the kings of Israel.

David being now settled in Ziklag, divers of Saul's men fell to him, men of great strength and prowess, and much renowned for their valiant deeds, whose names are registered in 1 Chron. xii. Some of these were of the tribe of Gad; but most of them were of Saul's own brethren, the tribe of Benjamin. And though some of Judah came in with them; yet David observing so many of them to be Benjamites, was a little shy of them lest they were sent as spies, to betray him: till they gave him assurance that they came with sincere minds to join with him, and help him; and then he made them captains over his bands.

Strengthened with these recruits, he went up with his men, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezerites, and the Amalekites; and cutting them all off, left neither man nor woman alive, that there might be none to bring tidings to Gath of what he had done, and so make the Philistines weary of him. Then returning to Ziklag, with a great booty of cattle and other spoils, he went afterwards to visit king Achish; who asking him whither he had made a road that time? and being told he went against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerameelites (who sprang from Judah by Thamah) and against the south of the Kenites (the posterity of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law) all which were either of Israel, or friends and allies to Israel, and enemies to the Philistines; Achish, be-

lieving David therein, was well enough pleased with his expedition: and reckoning David had thereby made himself hateful to his own people, he put the greater confidence in him, and concluded he should be his servant forever.

But this could not have been long undiscovered, had not the Philistines been wholly intent at the same time upon a war with Israel. Which though it served to hide the havoc David had lately made upon their friends, yet it brought upon David a very great exercise.

For the Philistines drawing out their forces to fight against Israel, Achish sending for David, gave him notice that he was resolved he and his men should go with him to the battle.

This was an hard pinch upon David: but not being in a condition to deny, he briskly answered, 'Thou shalt see then what service I can do.' Well, replied Achish, 'If thou behave thyself bravely, I will make thee captain of my guards forever.'

David, no doubt, was in a great strait between two. On the one hand to draw his sword against his own king, the Lord's anointed; against his own nation, the peculiar people of God; against those who were to be his own subjects; was an act too unnatural to be thought on without horror. On the other hand to betray the trust reposed in him by a prince, who (though an heathen and an enemy) had so courteously received him in distress, so kindly entertained him, so nobly provided for him, and so confidently relied on him; and to turn against him in battle, would be so ungrateful and base an act, that death itself was rather to be chosen: and yet, humanly speaking, there appeared no way to avoid one of these evils. But God found a way to deliver David out of this great strait, which we must seek in chap. xxix.

For when the Philistines had drawn their forces together to a general rendezvous at Aphek, the lords of the Philistines passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David with his men coming up in the rear

with king Achish, the princes of the Philistines began to pick a quarrel with David and his men, asking, 'What do these Hebrews here?' Achish told them, that was David, who had been servant of Saul king of Israel: but revolting from Saul, had been with him a considerable time, supposed to be about four months; and he had never found but he was trusty to him ever since he came.

But the princes of the Philistines were not willing to trust him. And therefore they somewhat peremptorily said to their king, 'Make this fellow return, that he may go to Ziklag, the place thou hast appointed him; and let him not go down with us to the battle, lest in the battle he turn against us: for wherewith shall he reconcile himself to his master, but with our heads? For is not this that David of whom the Hebrew women sang one to another in dances, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'

Achish, finding his lords so resolute, and not thinking that a fit time to contend with them, took David aside; and acknowledging his fidelity, and how acceptable his services had hitherto been to him, let him know that the lords of the Philistines did not favour him; and therefore wished him to return peaceably to Ziklag, that he might not displease them, 1 Sam. xxix.

Though this was the most welcome thing that could be to David, yet that he might seem rather to submit to it, than desire it, he began to expostulate with Achish; asking him, 'What have I done? What hast thou found in thy servant, from the time I came to thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?'

'Nay, replied Achish, thou art to me as an angel of God.' But the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' Wherefore now, said he, get up betimes in the morning as soon as it is light, and depart with thy master's servants that came with thee.

Glad to be thus fairly dismissed, David with his men departed early next morning, to return to Ziklag; having increased his numbers in this expedition. For

some of the tribe of Manasseh fell in with him, as he marched from Ziklag to join the Philistines' army; and others fell to him now in their return back, who did him good service afterwards.

But Saul, meanwhile, was in great perplexity. For having, as we read in chap. xxviii. 4, &c. taken a view of the Philistines' host, while they were in Shunem, before they came to Aphek, when he saw their strength, which Aphek signifies, fear seized on him, and his heart greatly trembled. And now, destitute of other helps, he would have inquired of the Lord: but the Lord would not answer him, neither by dream, nor by Urim, nor prophets. How just was this upon him! for he had destroyed the priests, by whom he should have inquired: and the prophet Samuel, whom also he had slighted, was gone to rest.

He would now have been glad to consult a wizard. But that he might shew some zeal for the law of God, he had banished the wizards, and those that had familiar spirits, out of the land. Yet in this strait, he bids his servants seek him out a woman that had a familiar spirit, that he might inquire of her. They told him there was such a woman at Endor, a town in the tribe of Manasseh. Whereupon Saul, disguising himself, took two men with him, and went to the woman by night, and desired her to divine unto him by the familiar spirit, and bring up to him whom he should name to her.

She, little thinking he had been Saul, said to him, 'Alas! thou knowest what Saul hath done; how he hath cut off those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land: wherefore then dost thou lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?' But Saul, swearing to her by the Lord that there should no punishment happen to her for this thing, she asked him whom she should bring up to him; and he said, 'Bring me up Samuel.'

She then raising an evil spirit, which came in the likeness of Samuel, when she saw it, she cried out, and said to Saul, 'Why hast thou deceived me? for

thou art Saul :’ which it is supposed she learned by the spirit she had raised. Saul bid her not to be afraid ; and asked her what she had seen ? she told him, she saw gods, so she called those diabolical apparitions, which Satan uses to further his illusions, ascending out of the earth. Saul, not satisfied with that answer, asked her what form he was of, that was coming up ; She replied, ‘ An old man cometh up, and is covered with a mantle.’ Saul, by that concluding that it was Samuel (who, good man, was at rest, out of the reach of Saul, the witch and the devil) stooped down with his face towards the ground, and bowed himself ; thereby expressing that respect to the devil, that he would have done to Samuel.

The apparition, that it might aptly personate Samuel, asked Saul why he had disquieted him, to bring him up : Saul, to excuse the trouble he had given him, told him he was sore distressed : ‘ For the Philistines, said he, make war upon me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.’

Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, said the pretended Samuel, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy ? Then going on, in personating Samuel, he added, ‘ The Lord hath done as he spake by me ; for he hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David.’ And this the Lord hath done to thee, because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, to execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek. ‘ Moreover, said he, the Lord also will deliver the host of Israel, together with thee, into the hands of the Philistines : and tomorrow thou and thy sons shall be with me ;’ that is, dead, as Samuel is, whom thou takest me for.

At that word, fear so possessed dispirited Saul, that (his strength also, through long fasting, failing him : for he had eaten nothing all the day before, nor all that night) he fell all along on the earth. Which when the witch saw, she came to him, earnestly intreating him

to let her set some food before him, and that he would eat, But he refused, until his servants, together with the woman, did even compel him to consent. And then having a fat calf in the stall, she quickly killed it; and kneading some flour, baked unleavened cakes; of which Saul and his servants did eat, and then returned to the camp the same night.

While Saul was thus distressed, a very great exercise befell poor David. For when he, after three days' march, came weary back from the Philistines' camp to Ziklag, he found the town in great part lain in ashes, his wives, and all the rest of the women and children, carried away captives, and their goods and cattle made a prey.*

This great and unexpected calamity did so deeply affect David and his men, that lifting up their voice they wept, till they could weep no longer. And indeed David had cause enough to weep; for he had not only lost both his wives, and whatsoever else he had there, but was in danger to lose his life also; for the people, in the height of their grief, their passion overpowering their reason, threatened to stone him.

In this distress, David had recourse to the Lord his God for comfort and encouragement. And calling to Abiathar the priest to bring him the ephod, he inquired of the Lord if he should pursue after that troop of robbers, that had sacked and fired the town; and if he should overtake them. And the Lord bid him pursue; assuring him that he should not only overtake them, but should recover the captives, and all the spoil, 1 Sam. xxx.

With this encouragement David and his men set forward upon the pursuit. But by that time they were come to the brook Besor, two hundred of his men were so weary and spent with their three days' march before, and now again, that, not able to pass over the brook, they were forced to stay behind there, while David with four hundred men continued the pursuit.

These, as they went on, found a poor straggler, half dead and speechless for want of food; for he had neither eaten nor drank for three days and nights.... Him they brought to David. And when they had given him some bread and water to eat and drink, and a piece of a cake of figs, with some raisins, to cheer his spirits, he began to revive.

Then David asking him whence he was, and to whom he belonged, the fellow told him he was an Egyptian, but servant to an Amalekite: that they had made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, who were of the Philistines, and upon the coast of Judah, and upon the coast of Caleb; and we burnt Ziklag, said he, with fire: and because I fell sick three days ago, my master left me here.

But canst thou, said David, bring me down to this company? yes, said he: and if thou wilt swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, I will bring thee down to them. And accordingly he did bring them to the place where this troop of Amalekites lay scattered about upon the ground, eating and drinking and dancing, for joy of the great spoil they had taken.

But when David came up with them, he and his men flew with that fury and force upon them, that he cut them all off, not suffering a man of them to escape; except four hundred young men, who, being mounted on camels, fled and got away.

Thus David rescued his two wives, and recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away; so that there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that had been taken from them; but David recovered all. And besides what they had taken from him, he took the flocks and herds, which those rovers had taken from the Philistines and others in that expedition.... And this his men drove before their own cattle, calling it David's spoils.

Then marching back towards the brook Besor, the two hundred men which he had left there, having by

this time a little rested and refreshed themselves, came out to meet him, and congratulate him on his good success.

These David courteously saluted, asking them how they did. And when afterwards mention was made of dividing the spoil, some churlish fellows, amongst those that had gone through, began to object, alledging, that because those two hundred went not with them in the pursuit, they should not have any of the spoil that was recovered, save every man his wife and children, and his own proper goods; which they might take and be gone.

But David putting them in mind that it was not merely by their own prowess, but by God's providence, they had gotten all the spoil, told them in a gentle way, 'Ye must not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us; who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hands. For who, said he, will hearken to you in this matter? But as his part is that goeth to the battle, so ought his part to be that tarrieth by the stuff: let them part it equally.' And this, from that time forward, became a statute and ordinance in Israel.

Now when David was returned to Ziklag, he took of the spoil, and sent it up and down amongst his friends, the elders of Judah, in divers places, those more especially where he and his men were wont to haunt: letting them know, it was a present for them, of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.

But while David had been thus exercised, the two great armies of the Philistines and the Israelites having joined battle, the Philistines prevailed; and the men of Israel, flying before them, fell down slain in mount Gilboa. Whereupon the Philistines, pressing hard upon Saul and his sons, slew Jonathan and Abinadab, and Malchishua, three of Saul's sons, and followed Saul so close, that, coming within bow-shot of him, the archers hit him, and wounded him sorely,* 1 Sam. xxxi.

He, feeling himself mortally wounded, called to his armour-bearer, and bid him draw his sword, and thrust him through, lest those uncircumcised should overtake him, and thrust him through, or put him to some ignominious death: but his armour-bearer being himself in great fear, refused. Whereupon Saul, seeing no other remedy, fell upon his own sword, and died. Which when his armour-bearer saw, he fell upon his own sword, and died with his master. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and his men, for it was a general rout and slaughter that same day.

Next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, finding Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa, they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour; and sending messengers into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish their victory in the house of their idols, and among the people, they put his armour in the house of Ashteroth, one of their chief idols. But his body, with the bodies of his sons, they fastened to the wall of Bethshan.

But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard how reproachfully the Philistines had hung up the bodies of Saul and his sons, they (in a grateful remembrance of the good service he had done them, in delivering them from Nahash, king of the Ammonites, 1 Sam. xi) selecting out all the valiant men amongst them, went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his three sons, from the wall of Bethshan; and having brought them to Jabesh, first burned them, till the flesh was consumed, to prevent their being taken up again; and then burying the bones under a tree at Jabesh, fasted seven days, in token of mourning.

This victory proved the more advantageous to the Philistines, for that the men of Israel, that were on the other side of the valley wherein the battle was fought, and they also that were on the other side Jordan, when they understood that the host of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, forsook their

cities and fled, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

By that time David had been two days returned to Ziklag, from the slaughter of the Amalekites that had sacked and fired it, came a man on the third day, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head, as the manner was in those times and countries, in case of extraordinary sorrow; and being come to David, he fell to the earth, and did obeisance, 2 Sam. i.

David asking him whence he came, he answered, 'Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped: tell me then, I pray thee, said David, how went the matter?' He answering, 'The people are fled from the battle, and many of them are fallen and dead; and among the rest Saul, and Jonathan his son.' David asked him how he knew that Saul and Jonathan were dead: Whereupon he gave him this particular account:

'As I happened, said he, by chance to be upon mount Gilboa, I saw Saul leaning upon his spear, and the chariots and horsemen following hard after him. And when, looking behind him, he saw me, he called me to him; and having asked who I was, he desired me to fall upon him and kill him; for though he had fallen upon his own sword, yet his coat of mail hindering his sword from piercing him to his heart, he was still heart-whole, but in anguish. Whereupon, being sure he could not live after he was fallen, I fell upon him and slew him: and taking the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was upon his arm, have brought them hither unto my lord.'

When David had heard this sorrowful news, too well confirmed by the sight of the crown and bracelet, he rent his clothes, as did also all the men that were with him; and, mourning and weeping, fasted until the evening for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.

Then calling to him again the young man that had brought him this account, he examined him what

countryman he was. Who, telling him he was the son of a stranger, an Amalekite; David asked him how he durst stretch forth his hand, without fear, to destroy the Lord's anointed. But seeing, said David, thou art convicted by thy own confession, thy blood be upon thine own head. Then calling to one of his guards, he bid him go fall upon him; which the soldier did, and slew him. Afterwards David lamented over Saul, and over Jonathan his son, in a funeral elegy: which read in 2 Sam. i, from verse 19 to the end.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

SACRED HISTORY.

PART III.

THE

Second Book of Samuel;

INCLUDING THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES; AND CONTAINING AN HISTORY OF FORTY YEARS.

ALTHOUGH Saul was slain, and three of his sons with him;* yet he had another son living, whose name was Ishbosheth, and a valiant general, named Abner, 2 Sam. ii, and whom the people would set up for king, was very uncertain. David, therefore, being yet at Ziklag, and not knowing whether he might venture into any of the cities of Judah; that he might act safely, having the priest and the ephod with him, he inquired of the Lord; and the Lord directing him to go to Hebron, he went thither, taking with him his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, and all his men, whom he placed every man with his household in the cities of Hebron.

Long he had not been in Hebron before the men of Judah came to congratulate his return, and to offer him the crown, 2 Sam. ii. And before they left him, they anointed him king over Judah; which was as far as they could go.

David understanding by them, that the men of Jabesh-Gilead had buried Saul, he sent messengers to them; and together with giving them thanks for performing that kind office to his father-in-law, he took occasion to let them know, that he was now king of Judah, and would requite that kindness to them; which was a fair invitation to them also to proclaim him king there.

But Abner, who was general of all the forces that had been Saul's, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, who was then forty years of age; and bringing him to Mahanaim (which was the place where Jacob, returning from Laban, was met by the angels of God, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2) he made him king over all Israel.

Thus was this new kingdom quickly divided, Judah following David, and Israel sticking to Saul's son Ishbosheth. But this rent, being but of man's making, lasted not long, ere God found means to make it up again.

Yet, in the mean time, some bickerings happened between the forces of these rival kings; for Abner, drawing out king Ishbosheth's forces, marched them from Mahanaim to Gibeon; which Joab, captain-general of king David's forces, and son to Zeruah, David's sister, understanding, he also led forth David's men: and at the pool of Gibeon, the two armies meeting, sat down in sight of one another, having the pool between them.

After a while, Abner provoked Joab to send forth a party to skirmish; which Joab agreeing to, twelve of a side issued forth of each camp: these fighting not in bodies, but single handed, man to man, every one caught his fellow by the head, and thrusting each other through the body, they all fell down together. From which bold and resolute action, that place was called Helkath-Hazzurim, that is, the field of strong men.

This desperate resolution of these forlorn hopes, so heated the spirits of the soldiers on either side, that, the armies presently joining, a sharp battle was

fought between them ; wherein David's men at length prevailing, Abner was beaten and forced to fly.

Ishbosheth's men thus routed, Asahel, Joab's younger brother, a very nimble-footed youth, in the pursuit took after Abner, and followed him so close, that Abner finding he could not escape him by running, turned again, and made a stand, to see what he was that followed him so hard ; and observing him to be but a youth, and understanding withall that he was Joab's brother, he wished him to give over pursuing him, and take some other prisoner for his prey ; but Asahel would not turn aside from following him.

Abner went a little further ; but finding that Asahel still pressed upon him, he spake to him again, desiring him to turn from him and leave him : ' For why, said he, shouldst thou provoke me to kill thee ? And how shall I look upon thy brother Joab when I have done it ?'

But young Asahel, ambitious of the honour of taking the general prisoner, would by no intreaty be persuaded to leave him, but still pressed harder on him ; which when Abner saw, and that unless he would be his prisoner, there was no way but to kill or be killed, he smote him with the hinder end of his spear under the fifth rib, so that the spear came out behind him, and down he fell dead in the place.

His falling and lying there gave opportunity to Abner to escape : for though Joab and Abishai, his other brother, with many others, pursued Abner also ; yet when they came to the place where Asahel lay dead, they all stood still : so that Abner got time to rally what he could of his scattered forces, and having drawn them up together into one troop, made a stand with them on the top of an hill, 2 Sam. ii.

Then sounding a parley, he called to Joab, and putting him in mind that they were all brethren, both by nation and religion, he asked him if he intended the sword should devour forever, and did not consider that it would be bitterness in the latter end, that he

was so backward to sound a retreat. Whereupon Joab, letting him know that the people, if he had not spoken, would have given over the pursuit in the morning, sounded a retreat; and so Abner with his men travelling all night through the plain and over Jordan, got back to Mahanaim; and Joab with his men marching all night also, reached Hebron by break of day. And although they had fought so fiercely, yet the number of the slain was not great on either side; for Abner lost but three hundred and sixty men, and Joab but nineteen, beside his brother Asahel.

But though they parted thus now, yet hostilities did not cease between the two kings and their subjects; for the war continued long between the two houses, 2 Sam. iii; wherein though Abner strengthened himself as much as he could for the house of Saul; yet the house of David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. And yet Ishbosheth might probably have held it out longer, had it not been for an accident which his own indiscretion brought upon him; by which he lost Abner from his interest, and with him all strength and courage. It happened thus:

Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, whom Ishbosheth charged Abner with having lain with. Abner, a man of high stomach, took this for a great affront; and in high displeasure said to king Ishbosheth, 'Am I a dog's head (that is, Am I as contemptible with thee as a dog) I who have shewed thus much kindness unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren and to his friends, against Judah, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me with a fault concerning this woman? So do God to Abner, and more also, except as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from one end of the land to the other.'

Whether the charge was true or no, Ishbosheth, a poor low spirited prince, was so struck with this lofty

language of Abner, that he could not answer him a word. And Abner, being in good earnest, sent agents to David, to transact the matter on his behalf; giving them in charge to acknowledge David's title, and to assure him, that if he would make a league with him, he would use his interest to bring over all Israel to him.

David consented on those terms to make such a league with him. But one thing he required of him previous thereunto; which was, that he should bring with him his wife Michal, the daughter of Saul: otherwise, he let him know he would not so much as see him.

David sent also ambassadors to Ishbosheth, to demand of him his wife Michal. Whereupon Ishbosheth sent and took her from her husband Phaltiel, and sent her to David; the poor man her husband following her weeping as far as to Bahurim, where Abner meeting with him, turned him back.

Abner meanwhile practised with the elders of Israel, to bring them over to David; thus discoursing with them, 'Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you. Now, therefore, seeing David is the man, by whom the Lord hath said, he will save his people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and from all their enemies, pursue your former desire, and make him your king,' 2 Sam iii.

Neither did he tamper only with the Israelites in general; but particularly with the elders of Benjamin, who were more immediately concerned for the house of Saul. And when he found he had gained his point upon them, he then went to Hebron, taking only twenty men with him, and presented himself to David.

David received Abner and his men courteously: and to shew the regard he had to him, he made a feast for them; after which, Abner taking his leave of David, told him, 'He would go and gather all Israel to him, that they might make a league with him; and that he might reign over them all, according to his heart's desire.'

Abner was but newly gone from Hebron, when Joab, David's general, who, during the time that Abner had been with David, had been out with a party upon an expedition against the Philistines, returned with a great spoil to Hebron; and being quickly told, by some of his creatures, that Abner had been there, and that the king had received and entertained him kindly, and dismissed him peaceably, he was much disturbed at it: for Joab hated Abner for more causes than one; not only because he had slain his brother Asahel; but for that he doubted, if Abner should bring over Israel to David, and by that means ingratiate himself with the king, he himself might be in danger of being supplanted by him: for Abner was a man of great courage and conduct, and had withall great interest in the people.

Joab therefore hastening to king David, in a rough and soldierly manner, asked him, 'What he had done? It seems, said he, Abner came unto thee; how is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?' Then suggesting to David, that Abner came only as a spy, to see his strength, and observe the state of his affairs, that he might deceive him; he went out from David, and sent messengers after Abner to bring him back again, as if David had something further to say to him; whereas David knew nothing of it.

Abner thinking no harm, nor suspecting any danger, returned; and as soon as he was come to Hebron, Joab, who waited for that purpose, took him aside in the gate in a shew of friendship, and under pretence of some private business, there basely stabbed him to death; pretending that he did it in revenge of the death of Asahel his brother, whom Abner in his own defence had slain in battle.

When David heard of this barbarous murder he cried out, 'I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord forever, from the blood of Abner. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and of all his father's house: and let the house of Joab never be without one that

hath an issue, or that is a leper, and so is legally unclean, or that through weakness or infirmity leaneth upon a staff, or that wanteth bread.'

Then commanding Joab and all the people that were with him to rend their clothes, and girding themselves with sackcloth to mourn before Abner, king David himself following the bier, they buried Abner in Hebron. At which the king, lifting up his voice, wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept also : but the king more especially lamented over Abner, saying, ' Died Abner as a fool dieth ! Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters ; but as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou : ' and with that all the people wept again over him. And when, according to the custom they then had of feasting at burials, they came to invite David to eat, he utterly refused, solemnly binding himself not to taste of any food until the sun was set, 2 Sam. iii.

This carriage of David's the people took great notice of ; and, as they generally liked what he did, they were much pleased with this : for from hence all concluded that David was not consenting, nor any way privy to Abner's death.

But to his domestic servants the king complained more particularly ; and bewailing his own condition, said, ' Know ye not that a prince, and a great man, is fallen this day in Israel ? And I, though anointed king, am yet but weak, and not well settled in my kingdom : and these men, the sons of Zeruah, to wit, Joab and Abishai ; for Abishai also was in the plot against Abner, 2 Sam iii. 30, are too hard for me.' Therefore I cannot now call them to account for it ; but must leave them to the Lord, who will reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

And, indeed, besides the baseness of this murder, which such a man as David could not but abhor, he had great cause to lament this untimely death of Abner, with respect to his own affairs : for it robbed him of a most serviceable and beneficial friend, broke all the measures they had taken for uniting the two king-

doms, and was likely to endanger his losing the Israelitish crown, had Ishbosheth, who then wore it, lived longer.

But this murder of Abner was followed by another, not less treacherous nor inhuman. For Ishbosheth, Saul's son, whom Abner had set upon the throne of Israel, was greatly dejected, and even dispirited, when he heard of Abner's death; and the Israelites in general were much troubled for the loss of their captain-general: so that Ishbosheth their king was little regarded, and less guarded.

This gave encouragement to two ruffians to conspire his death, 2 Sam. iv, to which they might probably be the more emboldened, from a consideration, that of Saul's legitimate stock there was none left who were in a condition to revenge his death upon them. For Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was but a child of seven years old, and lame too of his feet, by a fall which his nurse let him take when she fled in haste with him, upon the report that his father and grandfather were slain.

These two regicides, whose names were Baanah and Rechab, were brothers, sons of Rimmon, a Beerothite, belonging to Benjamin, and were captains of bands; but some think of rovers, that lived by spoil and pillage. These coming to Ishbosheth's house, about the middle of the day, under pretence of fetching wheat (so little odds, it seems, there was between the palace and granary) went directly into his bed-chamber; where finding the king lying on a bed, because it was the heat of the day, they slew him, and cut off his head, in the second year of his reign.* Then, taking the head with them, they went out again undiscovered, and travelled all night through the plain toward Hebron: conceiving high hopes that they should be welcome guests to David, bringing with them such a present. In expectation whereof, being come to Hebron, they presented the head to David, with this short speech; 'Behold the head of Ishbosh-

* A. M. 2951.

eth, the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life : and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

But David, filled with horror and indignation at the sight of the murdered king's head, said to these bloody regicides, ' As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one came and brought me tidings of Saul's death, supposing he had brought me acceptable news ; nay, and brought me also the crown and bracelet which Saul wore, expecting I would have given him a reward ; yet, when I understood by him, that he had a hand in his death, I caused him to be seized on, and slain in Ziklag.... How much more then, when such wicked men as ye are, have slain a righteous person, one that had done you no wrong, in his own house (where he ought to have been safe) and upon his bed (where he could not defend himself) ? Shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and cut you off from the earth ?' 2 Sam. iv. Then commanding his guards to fall upon them, they slew them ; and having cut off their hands and feet, hanged them up over the pool in Hebron : but the head of Ishbosheth they buried in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

This murder of Ishbosheth made way for the uniting the kingdoms of Israel and Judah into one again, 2 Sam. v. For upon his death, all the tribes of Israel, that is, the elders, or heads of the tribes came unto David at Hebron ; and having, as an introduction, told him, they were of his bone and flesh : and in times past, even when Saul was their king, he was their captain that led them out and in ; and that it was of him that the Lord had said, ' Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and shalt be a captain over them ;' David thereupon making a league with them, they anointed him king over Israel, and at Hebron they were feasted three days together.

David had lived now about two years in Hebron, and five years more he lived there : for he is said to have reigned seven years in Hebron. And having now the

united forces of Israel and Judah under his command, he led forth his men to Jerusalem, against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land; who, trusting too much to the strength of the place, told David in derision, 'Except he took away the blind and the lame; he should not come in thither.' Implying, the place was so strong, that if there were none but blind and lame to defend it, he with all his forces could not take it.

David, resolving to correct their insolence, caused proclamation to be made, that whosoever should scale the fort, by getting up into the gutter, and should smite the Jebusites with their lame and their blind, who had made themselves hateful to David, he should be captain-general of all his forces.

This Joab, David's sister's son, who had command before of the forces of Judah, performed. By which means David took the strong hold of Zion, in which he afterwards dwelt: and when he had built it round about from Millo (or the fortress) and inward, it was called, 'The city of David.'

Now began David's affairs to prosper, and his fame to spread: for the Lord God of Hosts was with him; and he perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel. Which his neighbours also took notice of: and thereupon Hiram, king of Tyre, sent ambassadors to David, to congratulate his accession to the crown, and to make him a present of cedar trees, and workmen to build him a palace.

On the other hand, when the Philistines heard that the Israelites had anointed David for their king, they came up to seek him, spreading themselves in the valley of Rephaim; whereupon David went down to the hold. But before he would go forth against them, he inquired of the Lord if he should go, and if the Lord would deliver them into his hand? And the Lord bidding him go, and assuring him that he would deliver them to him, he marched forth against them, and smote them, and put them to the rout: so that they fled, and for haste left their images behind them, which

David and his men burnt. The place where this battle was fought, David called Baal-perazim, that is, The plain of breaches, or divisions; giving this reason for the name, 'The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters,' 2 Sam. v.

Yet long it was not ere the Philistines, having levied new forces, came up again; and spreading themselves in the valley of Rephaim, offered David battle.

David would not presume upon his late success; but inquired of the Lord again. And now the Lord commanded him not to go up, that is, directly to engage them; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees: and when he should hear the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, then he should bestir himself; for then the Lord would go out before him, to smite the host of the Philistines. And David doing so, as the Lord had commanded, he smote the Philistines with a great slaughter.

Having by this means now gotten a time of quiet and respite from war, David, consulting his captains and chief leaders, said to all the congregation of Israel, 'If it seem good unto you, and that if it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites, in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us. And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul,' 1 Chron. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

To this proposal the whole congregation assenting, as a thing that all the people approved, David gathering the people together, went up with them to Baalah (otherwise called Kirjath-jearim) belonging to Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of Hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubims.

The ark is said to have been twenty years in the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. vii. 1, 2. But that twenty years must be referred to the time of the single administration of Samuel in the government: for the ark was taken in the last year of Eli, and the Philistines kept it but seven months, 1 Sam. vi. 1. Samuel succeeding to Eli in the government, is reckoned to have judged Israel by himself twenty years before there was a king, and twenty years more are allotted to Samuel and Saul together, and to Saul by himself after Samuel. So that from the death of Eli, when the ark was taken, to the death of Saul, must be forty years. And though seven months of that time it was with the Philistines, yet David having, after Saul's death, reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, and some time after that in Jerusalem, before he went to fetch up the ark, it could not be much less than fifty years that the ark had been at Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab.

Thither went David and the Israelites to fetch it from thence, and bring it to Jerusalem. But not minding the law, which required them to carry the ark upon their shoulders, Numb. vii. 9; they, following the example of the Philistines, put it into a cart, appointing Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, to drive the cart. And in this manner setting forward, David with all the house of Israel followed it, playing before the Lord upon divers sorts of musical instruments, as harps, psalteries, timbrels, cornets, and cymbals.

Thus they went on till they came to a place called Nachon's threshing-floor, where the oxen stumbling, shook the cart: which made Uzzah officiously put forth his hand and lay hold of the ark, lest it should fall.* Uzzah's intention, no doubt, was good in doing this. But it being contrary to the law, which forbade all but the priests, even the Levites themselves, to touch the holy things, Numb. iv. 15, the Lord smote Uzzah for his rashness; so that he died there by the ark.

This breach which the Lord had made upon poor Uzzah, struck David with great fear, 1 Chron. xiii ; and mistaking it for a sign that God was not pleased the ark should come to him, he would not bring it into his city ; but carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite, who was a Levite : where it continued three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-Edom, and all that he had.

In which time David perceiving their error, which had provoked the Lord to anger, and occasioned Uzzah's death, and understanding that the Lord had blessed the house of Obed-Edom since the ark had been with him ; he took heart now to remove it from thence, and bring it into his own city, 2 Sam. vi, 1 Chron. xiii.

But that he might do it regularly, having first prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent, and declared that none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites, he called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the chief of the Levites ; and putting them in mind that they were the chief of the fathers of the Levites, bid them sanctify themselves, they and their brethren, that they might bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place which he had prepared for it : ' For, said he, because ye did not so at the first, therefore the Lord our God made this breach upon us ; for that we sought him not after the due order.'

The priests and Levites thus admonished of their duty, sanctified themselves ; and the Levites took up the ark of God, with the staves thereof, and bare it upon their shoulders, as Moses, according to the word of the Lord, had commanded. And the Levites, by David's direction, appointed some of their brethren to sing, and to play upon instruments of music. And when all things were thus disposed in a due order, king David, with the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, set forward to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the house of

Obed-Edom with joy. And when they that did bear the ark of the Lord had advanced six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings, to wit, seven bullocks and seven rams.

King David had dressed himself that day, somewhat like the Levites and singers, in a linen ephod, in which he danced before the ark with all his might;* and so brought up the ark with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet, and with several other sorts of musical instruments. And as they entered the city, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looking through a window, saw her husband, king David, leaping and dancing before the Lord: and either not understanding, or not duly considering the reason upon which he did it, she despised him in her heart.

Now when they had brought in the ark of the Lord, and had set it in its place, in the midst of the tabernacle that king David had pitched for it, he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And then blessing the people in the name of the Lord of Hosts, he distributed to every one of Israel, as well to the women as the men, a cake, or loaf, of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine, and so dismissed them.

Then having appointed certain Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to record what was done, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel, king David delivered unto Asaph, the chief of the singers, a psalm of thanksgiving unto the Lord; which as delivered in 1 Chron. xvi, from ver. 8 to 37, contains the hundred and fifth psalm to ver. 16, with little variation; and then takes in the ninety-sixth psalm.

Matters being thus disposed, as the people returned every one to his house, so David returned to his also, to bless his household, 2 Sam. vi. And now out comes his wife Michal to meet him, and (for want of a right consideration and sense of the service he had been engaged in) thus in an ironical, upbraiding way received him; 'How glorious, said she, was the king

* A. M. 2959.

of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself in the sight of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows uncovereth himself!

King David not brooking this reproach from his wife, told her, 'It was before the Lord he had so humbled himself, who had chosen him before her father, and before all his house, and had appointed him ruler over his people Israel.' Then he let her know, that for all her taunting, he would play before the Lord, and would be yet more vile in this sense, and debase himself more in his own sight; and that though she despised him, those very maid-servants whom she twitted him with, would honour him for it.

Michal's offence in this matter was threefold; against her husband, against her king, and against God; for whose sake, and in honour of whom, her royal husband had done that which she reproached him for. And for this offence, her punishment was, that she should be childless all the rest of her life, as, for aught appears, she had been hitherto.

By this time David's house, which Hiram, 2 Sam. v. 11, 1 Chron. xiv. 1, had sent him timber and workmen to build, was finished, and he peaceably settled in it; the Lord having given him rest for a while from all his enemies round about, 2 Sam. vii, 1 Chron. xvii. Upon which occasion he is thought to have composed the thirtieth psalm, which the title thereof seems to import: though some think that psalm was made upon David's return after Absalom's rebellion, and his purging his house from Absalom's pollutions.

And now a religious concern possessed his mind, to build a temple to the Lord. Wherefore having Nathan the prophet one day with him, he said to the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in an house of cedar; but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains;' which is a periphrasis of the tabernacle.

Nathan readily understood him; and concluding so fair a motion deserved encouragement, replied, 'Go, do all that is in thine heart: for God is with thee.' But herein the good prophet missed, judging from his

own apprehension of the goodness of the thing, without consulting God ; who will have all his work done in his own time and way, and by such only as he appoints thereunto.

The same night therefore, the word of the Lord came to Nathan the prophet, saying, ‘ Go tell David, my servant, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in : for I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day ; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. In all the places wherein I have walked with all Israel, have I blamed any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, for not building me an house of cedar ? that thou shouldst presume to take such a work upon thee without my order.’

Then charging the prophet to remind David from how low a condition the Lord had taken him, and to what an height of greatness he had raised him, he bid him tell David that he would provide a place of rest and safety for his people in general, and in particular would establish David’s family : and that after his death, he would set up one of his sons upon his throne ; which son should build an house for him ; and he would establish the kingdom unto him for ever, and would be a father to him, and would take him for a son, and would deal by him as a son, 2 Sam. vii, 1 Chron. xvii ; so that if he should commit iniquity, he would not take his mercy wholly from him, to cut him off, as he had done Saul ; but would chastise him with the rod of men, that is, tenderly, as parents do their own children.

This message Nathan delivered to David ; and without doubt, then gave him the reason also, why the Lord would not let him build an house ; which was because he had made great wars, and had shed much blood ; as himself afterwards told his son Solomon, 1 Chron. xxii. 8,

When David had received this message, that he might shew his subjection to the will of God, and ex-

press his thankfulness to the Lord, he went in and sat before the Lord ; and debasing himself, that he might the more fully acknowledge the goodness and munificence of God unto him, in raising him to what he was, he returned most hearty thanks to the Lord for his manifold favours conferred on him, and for his gracious promise to settle his son upon the throne, and establish his family in the government ; concluding with earnest supplication, that the blessing of the Lord might rest upon him and his house forever. Which read more at large in 2 Sam. vii, from verse 18 to the end.

David, now sensible that he had mistaken his work, in designing to build an house for God, applied himself to his proper service for which the Lord had raised him up ; which was to subdue the enemies of Israel, and enlarge the kingdom which he was to leave to his peaceable successor, 2 Sam. viii, 1 Chron. xviii.

First, therefore, falling upon the Philistines, he took from them the royal city Gath, with the towns belonging to it, and brought the Philistines into subjection. This city Gath was called Methegammah, or the bridle of bondage, because it kept the country in bondage.

Then turning his forces upon Moab, he reduced the Moabites to that condition, that, demolishing their forts, he put to death whom he pleased, and whom he pleased he saved alive, making them his servants and tributaries.

From thence going on to settle the borders of the country, at the river Euphrates, Hadadezer (called also Hadarezer, 2 Chron. xviii. 3) the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, opposing him, he put Hadadezer to the worst, and took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen ; and reserving horses for an hundred chariots only, he houghed, or cut the hamstrings of the rest of the chariot horses.

The Syrians of Damascus, hearing how hard it went with Hadadezer, came forth to succour him ;

and of them David slew two and twenty thousand. This loss so weakened them, that David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus, and made the Syrians his servants and tributaries.

In his return from smiting the Syrians, the Edomites encountered him in a place called the Valley of Salt; of whom he slew eighteen thousand men, and thereby subdued Edom too; and putting garrisons upon them, made the Edomites also his servants. And upon this occasion he is thought to have composed the sixtieth psalm.

From this expedition he brought with him to Jerusalem good store of gold and of brass; for from Hadadezer's soldiers he took shields of gold; and from Berah and Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, he took a great deal of brass.

Thus came David safe back, the Lord having preserved him whithersoever he went, and given him renown for his great achievements. And now reigning over all Israel, and being at rest from war, he applied himself to execute judgment and justice unto all his people, having Joab, his sister Zeruah's son, for his general; Jehoshaphat for recorder; Zadok, the son of Ahitub, of the stock of Eleazar, 1 Chron. vi. 4 and 8, and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, of the line of Ithamar, for priests (grandson to that Ahimelech of Nob, whom Saul slew by the hand of Doeg, 1 Sam. xxii); Serajah for secretary of state; and Benajah, the son of Jehoiadah, for captain of the guards; which consisted of Cherethites, who were of Israel, and Pelethites, who were of Judah; veteran soldiers all. And David's sons, which were many, for he had six born in Hebron, while he lived there, and thirteen after he came to Jerusalem, besides the sons of his concubines, 1 Chron. iii, ver. 1 to 10, were all princes.

Hadadezer, it seems, had had wars with Toi (called also Tou, 1 Chron. xviii. 9) king of Hamath, a city of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 21, which fell to the lot of Napthali, Josh. xix. 32, 35. Wherefore king Toi, hearing how David had beaten Hadadezer, sent his

son Joram to salute king David, and congratulate his good success. Joram brought David a present from his father, of vessels of silver, gold, and brass; all which, with the silver and gold that he had taken from all the nations that he had subdued, king David did dedicate unto the Lord, for the service of the temple that was to be built.

And now, settled in peace and prosperity, David remembered the former kindness of his true friend and brother Jonathan, 2 Sam. ix. And inquiring if there was any of Saul's family unto whom he might shew kindness for Jonathan's sake, Ziba, an old servant of Saul's, was called, as one that could best give an account of his master's family. He acquainted David, that Jonathan had a son yet living, named Mephibosheth, who was lame of his feet. Whereupon David, understanding by Ziba where he was, sent and fetched him to him; and receiving him very courteously, bid him not fear; for he would certainly shew him kindness for his father Jonathan's sake, and would restore him all the lands of his grandfather Saul, and he should always eat at his table. Mephibosheth thereupon bowing, and abasing himself, expressed the sense he had of the king's goodness, in taking notice of so mean a person as he was.

But David calling for Ziba, said to him, 'I have given unto Mephibosheth, thy master's son, all that did appertain unto Saul, and to all his house. Thou, therefore, with thy sons and thy servants, shall till the land for him; and thou shalt bring in the fruits for thy master Mephibosheth's son (for Mephibosheth had a young son, named Micho). 'But as for Mephibosheth himself, he shall always eat at my table.' Ziba undertaking the charge, he and his family, fifteen sons and twenty servants, were all servants unto Mephibosheth; who himself, dwelling at Jerusalem, did eat continually at the king's table, as one of the king's sons.

Some time after this, 2 Sam. x, 1 Chron. xix, David having heard that Nahash, king of Ammon, was

dead, and that Hanun his son succeeded him; and gratefully remembering some kindness, which it seems Nahash had formerly shewed him, probably in the time of his troubles under Saul, though I find no particular mention of it in the story, in return of kindness, sent an embassy of condolence to Hanun, to comfort him for the death of his father, and congratulate his accession to the crown.

When these ambassadors were come to the Ammonitish court, the princes of Ammon persuaded their king, that David had not sent them in honour to his father, or to comfort him; but that, under that pretence, he had sent them as spies, to search out the strength of the city, that he might invade it.*

Hanun thereupon seizing on the ambassadors, shaved off one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle of their buttocks, and in that reproachful manner sent them away.

The men, thus basely exposed to contempt, were so ashamed, they knew not how to return home. Wherefore David, being advertised of the abuse, sent some to meet them, and bid them tarry at Jericho until their beards were grown again.

This violation of the law of nations, which gives protection to ambassadors, the Ammonites afterwards (but too late) considered it was not likely king David would put up with. Wherefore expecting to be called to account for it, they sent and hired men out of Syria and other neighbouring parts to the number of three and thirty thousand: and drawing out all their own men from their several cities, they made all the provision they could for their defence. And David, not bearing to let such an insolent affront go unpunished, sent Joab with all the host of the mighty men against them.

The Ammonites expecting them, had ranged their battle before their own city, at the entrance of the gate, having their mercenary forces in a body by themselves in the field; which when Joab saw, he also di-

* A. M. 2966.

vided his army into two parts ; and picking out all the choice men of Israel, he himself led them up against the mercenaries, leaving the rest of his forces with his brother Abishai, to engage the Ammonites. Then he and his brother agreeing to relieve each other as need should require, Joab exhorted all his men to be of good courage, and to behave themselves valiantly for their people, and for the cities of their God, and leave the success to the Lord.

Joab having thus encouraged his men, made a fierce charge upon the Syrians, and soon put them to flight. The sight of which so discouraged the Ammonites, that they fled also, and got into the city. And thus, with a victory easily obtained, Joab returned with his army to Jerusalem.

But it was not long ere he was obliged to draw forth his men again. For the Syrians, to recover their late loss, raised a new army ; and Hadarezer sent and brought over the Syrians that were beyond the river, who all came to Helam, having Shobach, the captain of Hadarezer's host, at the head of them.

As soon as David heard of this, he gathered all his forces together, and passing over Jordan, marched himself with them to Helam. The Syrians, as soon as they saw him come, putting themselves in order, gave him battle. In which David prevailing, the Syrians fled, having lost Shobach their general, and about seven and forty thousand men ; whereof some were horsemen, some foot, and some that fought in chariots. And when the petty kings, who were tributaries to Hadarezer, saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them : for having smarted so deeply for their kindness to the Ammonites, they were afraid to help them any more.

But David, resolving to chastise the Ammonites yet more sharply for their late insolence, sent Joab forth the next campaign with a very great army against them ; who having ravaged the country, and destroyed the Ammonites wherever he could come at them, laid

siege at length to their royal city Rabbah, the metropolis of the Ammonites.

But David, who had better have been at the head of his army, lay loitering now at home ; and having taken his ease upon his bed one afternoon, as the manner of great persons in those hot countries was, he arose in the evening, and to enjoy the benefit of a cool air walked upon the roof of his house, which, according to the appointment in the law, Deut. xxii. 8, was built flat, with battlements round about the roof, to prevent any one's falling off.

From thence his roving eye happened to espy a very beautiful woman bathing and washing herself privately in her garden, probably for purification-sake, according to the law, Lev. xv.* And inquiring who she was, he was told her name was Bathsheba, called also Bathshua, 1 Chron. iii. 5, the daughter of Eliam, called there also Ammiel, and wife of Uriah; who, though an Hittite by nation, was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and so marrying this Israelitish woman, lived in Jerusalem; but was at that time with the army at the siege of Rabbah.

David, taken with the woman's beauty, sent for her, and lay with her; and she thereupon conceiving, sent him word she was with child, 2 Sam. xi. Now though David seemed not to be sensible of the evil he had done, yet he was of the shame that might come upon him by it; and therefore contriving how to hide it, he sent to Joab to send home Uriah the Hittite to him, as if he had some particular business with him.

When Uriah was come to the king, after some general inquiries how Joab did, and how the people fared, and how the war proceeded, David, in seeming kindness to Uriah, as one that might be weary after his journey, bid him go down to his house and wash his feet, that is, rest and refresh himself; and withall sent a mess of meat after him. But Providence so disposed, that Uriah, though he took his leave of the king, did not go down to his house; but, falling in with

the yeomen of the guard, slept at the door of the king's house.

When David understood next morning that Uriah had not gone home, he called him to him, and asked him what the matter was that he did not go home, seeing he came off from a journey. Uriah bluntly and soldier-like made him answer, 'That inasmuch as the ark, with Israel and Judah, abode in tents, and his lord general Joab, with the rest of the king's servants, were encamped in the open fields, he would not indulge himself so far as to go to his house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with his wife.'

When David found he could not work upon him sober, he resolved to try what he could do with him when he was drunk. Wherefore, keeping him another day, he feasted him highly, and plied him so with strong liquors that he made him drunk; hoping that then he would go home to his wife: but neither sober nor drunk could Uriah be drawn to it. But at evening going forth from the king's presence, he clapt himself down in the guard-chamber, and there slept.

This put David upon a worse course: for now he resolved Uriah should die; that, since he would not cover, he might not discover, nor revenge his offence.

Wherefore dismissing Uriah, he sent by him a letter to Joab, wherein he ordered Joab to set Uriah in the forefront of the battle, and in the most dangerous place; and then retire from him, that he might be smitten and die.

Accordingly, Joab observing what part of the city was best defended, assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men; and when the besieged made a sally, they slew some of the besiegers, and amongst them Uriah.

Joab soon sent an express to David, to give him an account of the success of the war; bidding him, if he found the king displeased that things were no better, and that he should blame them for approaching so near, within danger of the wall, he should then tell

him of Uriah's death ; which, by the letter he had received, he knew would please him, though perhaps he might not then know why.

The messenger thus instructed went to David, and having given him an account of the battle ; how daringly the enemy sallied forth against them ; how they beat them back to the very entrance of the gate ; and how the archers, shooting from the wall, had slain some of the king's servants, and among the rest Uriah the Hittite. David, having what he aimed at, sent back the messenger, bidding him encourage Joab to go forward, and not to be troubled at the loss ; but consider that the sword makes no difference, but devours one as well as another ; and that therefore he should make his battle stronger, renew his assaults with greater vigour, and batter the city until he had overthrown it.

Now when Bathsheba heard that her husband Uriah was dead, she made a formal mourning for him ; and when that was over, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son ; but the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.

Meanwhile Joab having straitened Rabbah, and by assault taken that part of the city wherein the springs and conduits of water were, 2 Sam. xii, whence he foresaw the city could not long hold it, he dispatched a messenger to David, to acquaint him what progress he had made, and to intreat him to come with the rest of his forces, and be present in person at the taking of the city, lest, otherwise, if Joab should take it without him, or in his absence, it should thenceforth be called by Joab's name.

David thereupon, gathering his people together, went to Rabbah, and fighting against it, took it. And besides the spoil of the city, which he brought away in great abundance, he took their king's crown from off his head, and had it set upon his own head : which crown, weighing a talent of gold, was worth four thousand and five hundred pounds sterling, according

to Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, l. vi, c. x, besides the precious stones that were on it.

As for the people that were in Rabbah, they having exasperated him by a double offence; first, in the abuse put upon him in the persons of his ambassadors, 2 Sam. x. 4, which gave the occasion for this war: and now, in holding out to the last extremity till the place was taken by storm, he gave them no quarter: but, putting them to the extremest torments, made them suffer under saws and axes of iron, and under harrows, and caused them to pass through the brick-kiln. And having dealt in like manner with the inhabitants of the other cities of the Ammonites, he returned in triumph with his people to Jerusalem.

Now king David thought himself safe in the possession of Bathsheba, whom he had brought to his bed through the dishonour and blood of her husband; when God sent his prophet Nathan to him, to rouse him out of his adulterous lethargy, and make him unwittingly his own judge.

This the prophet did by proposing to him the following parable, as demanding justice of him for an oppressed poor man against a rich oppressor.

'There were, said Nathan to the king, two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and brought up among his children, so that it did eat and drink as he eat and drank, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there coming a traveller to visit the rich man, he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the stranger that was come to him; but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it, to entertain his guest.'

David's anger was greatly kindled against this rich man; and presently passing sentence on him, said to Nathan, 'As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing is worthy to die: and he shall also restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and had no pity.'

Little thought David that he had sentenced himself, till the prophet turning quick upon him, said, 'Thou art the man.' That was an home-stroke. Yet to set it more home, and leave David without defence or excuse, the prophet went on, and by way of aggravation added: 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom. I gave thee also the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee such and such things. Wherefore then hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? For thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife; for though he was slain by the Ammonites, yet inasmuch as thou didst contrive and appoint his death, thou art guilty of his blood; and therefore the sword shall not depart from thine house all thy days. And because thou hast despised me, in taking the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife, thus saith the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun: for though thou didst it secretly, I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun, in the most open manner.'

Poor David, pricked to the heart, and self-condemned, made no excuse; but simply said, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' The confession was short, but full. And he who knew the integrity of his heart, commissioned his prophet thereupon to tell him, he would not take him strictly at his word; but would transfer the sentence of death (which he unwittingly had pronounced upon himself) from him unto the child. 'The Lord also, said Nathan to David, hath put away thy sin: thou shalt not die thyself for it. Yet because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born to thee of this adulterous congress shall surely die.'

The prophet Nathan, having thus delivered his message, departed home : and immediately the Lord struck the child, so that it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child, and, keeping a fast, went in and lay all night upon the earth : so that although the elders of his house went to him, and intreated him to arise and eat, yet he would not.

On the seventh day from the child's birth (say Tremellius and Junius) the child died : and David's servants, seeing how he grieved while the child was alive, were afraid to tell him that it was dead, lest he should then afflict himself more. But when David by their whispering suspected, and upon inquiry understood that the child was dead, he arose from the earth, and washed and anointed himself, and having changed his apparel, he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped. After which, returning to his own house, he did eat.

This made his servants wonder, that he, who fasted and wept for the child while it was alive, should rise and refresh himself with food when it was dead. But David removed their wonder, by telling them he fasted and wept while the child was alive, in hopes that God would be graciously pleased to spare the child's life. 'But now, said he, that the child is dead, wherefore should I fast, seeing I cannot bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.'

About this time it was, at least on this occasion, that David composed the one and fiftieth psalm : which the reader, before he proceeds further, may do well to turn to and read.

After this, David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and she bare him another son. Whereupon the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to him, to bid him call this son Solomon ; which name signifies peaceable ; and was therefore given him, because the Lord had promised, not only that he himself should be a man of rest, but that he would give peace and quietness in his days to Israel, 1 Chron. xxii. 9. And because the

Lord loved this child, David called him also Jedidiah, that is, beloved of the Lord.

Although David had many sons, yet we read but of one daughter that he had, 2 Sam. xiii, whose name was Tamar, sister to Absalom, the king's third son, whom he had by Maacha, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.

And now began that judgment which God had so lately denounced against David, viz. 'That he would raise up evil against him out of his own house,' 2 Sam. xii. 11. For Amnon the king's eldest son, which he had by his wife Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, fell desperately in love with his half-sister Tamar, whose extraordinary beauty so captivated the young prince's affection, that he pined away through an hopeless desire after her: for she, being a young virgin, was so carefully kept within the king's house (as the manner of breeding the Jewish damsels was, those especially that were of the higher rank) that Amnon, though her brother, knew not how to come at her.

The trouble of Amnon's mind discovering itself in his countenance, gave occasion to Jonadab, his intimate friend and cousin-german (as being the son of Shimeah, David's brother) to inquire of him what ailed him, that he (who being the king's eldest son, might be supposed to have whatever he desired) looked so thin, and wasted daily in his flesh? Amnon, at Jonadab's importunity, told him plainly, he was in love with Tamar, his brother Absalom's sister.

Jonadab thereupon, being a very subtle man, advised his cousin Amnon to feign himself sick, and betake himself to his bed; which would draw his father to visit him: and then he should request his father to let his sister Tamar come and dress him something to eat, that he, seeing her do it, might eat it from her hand.

Pursuant to this advice, Amnon took his bed like a sick man; which when the king heard of, he quickly came to see him: and Amnon intreating the king his father to let his sister Tamar come and make him a

couple of cakes, the king, suspecting nothing of a design, sent word to Tamar, that she should go to her brother Amnon's house, and dress for him what he would have to eat.

Tamar very innocently went ; and finding her brother Amnon on his bed, she made him such cakes as he directed and having baked them, brought them to him : but his stomach did not yet serve him ; neither would he eat while the company was there. But when all were gone, so that he only and she were left alone together, he desired her to bring the cakes to him : which she doing, he took hold of her, and said, ' Come, lie with me, my sister.'

The poor princess, surprised at so strange a proposition, and hoping to prevail with him by persuasion, begged him to let her alone, and not attempt to violate her chastity : laying before him the guilt he would bring upon himself, by so positive a breach of the law, Lev. xviii. 9 ; the shame he would expose her to, and the contempt he would subject himself to, by committing an act not only very sinful, but extremely foolish also ; when as, in all probability, if he made suit to her father for her, he might have his consent to marry her : which course she advised him to take, perhaps to gain time, and free herself from the present danger.

But Amnon was not to be answered with words. This was not a sudden heat, but a settled desire, and a contrived design upon her. And, therefore, having now gained his opportunity, he was deaf to all her reasons, counsel, and intreaties ; and being stronger than she, he forced her.

Having obtained his wicked end, the answering of his lust, Amnon's hot love presently turned to burning hatred. He hated Tamar so exceedingly, that the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And in this hateful fit, he churlishly bid her ' Arise and be gone.'

This troubled Tamar much, not only from the sense of his unkindness, but of the danger of discover-

ing, by this means, the guilt and shame he had brought upon himself and her. Wherefore she told him, he had no cause to deal thus roughly with her; and that the evil of turning her thus out of doors, would be worse, in the consequences of it, than the other that he had done unto her. But he refusing to hear her, called his servant, and bid him put her out of doors, and bolt the door after her: which accordingly the servant did.

Poor Tamar, thus abused and basely dealt with, rent her garment, which was of divers colours, as, for distinction sake, the unmarried daughters of kings in that age used to wear: and having put ashes upon her head, she laid her hand also on her head, in token of great sorrow, and went crying away to her brother Absalom's house.

As soon as Absalom saw her in that condition, suspecting what had befallen her, he asked her, if her brother Amnon had been with her. And when she had told him how she had been dealt with, he wished her to consider that Amnon was her brother, against whom if she should complain, it was not likely she should obtain justice, he being the king's eldest son; and that her complaining would but spread her reproach, and bring infamy upon their whole family: and therefore he advised her to keep her own counsel, and not lay this injury to heart.

Tamar taking her brother Absalom's advice, remained in his house; but in a desolate condition. As for Absalom, he, dissembling his knowledge of the matter, hid his resentment of the injury: and though he hated Amnon, for having forced his sister; yet he took no notice of it to him.

But when king David heard of it, he was very wroth; yet we read not of any punishment inflicted on Amnon for it: for David was an indulgent father.

Full two years did Absalom wait for an opportunity to be revenged on his brother Amnon, which at length he thus contrived: he had a day of sheep-shearing at

his country-house, to which he invited all the king's sons; and to colour the matter invited the king himself first.

The king excused himself from going, upon the account that he would not put him to too great charges; and though Absalom pressed, he refused to go: yet to let him see he was not offended with him, he gave him his blessing before he parted with him. Absalom then intreated him to let his brother Amnon go with him; which David made some hesitation at, but Absalom's importunity prevailed with him, to let not only Amnon, but all the rest of the king's sons, go with him to his sheep-shearing feast.

Absalom had given his servants a strict charge beforehand, that when Amnon's heart should be merry with wine, and he should bid them smite him, they should fall on courageously and kill him, and he would bear them out. The servants, obsequious to their master's command, when he gave them the watch word, fell upon prince Amnon, though heir apparent to the crown, and killed him. This put all the rest of the king's sons in such a fright, not knowing where the assassination would end, that, not attempting to revenge their brother's death, they every one mounted his mule, and fled towards their father's court.

But report was speedier than they. So that ere they could reach the court, tidings were brought to David, 'That Absalom had slain all the rest of the king's sons, and had not left one of them alive.'

At this astonishing news, the king tore his garment, and lay on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent; which when Jonadab, David's brother's son, the same who had encouraged and counselled Amnon to take that course, for the satisfying of his lust, which had brought him to this untimely end, observed, he, to mitigate the king's grief, desired him not to think that all his sons were slain: for he could assure him, that only Amnon was dead; and that his death had been determined by Absalom from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

By that time Jonadab had done speaking, the rest of the king's sons came in ; and the king and they, with all the court, wept and lamented very sore.

Absalom meanwhile made his escape to Talmai, king of Geshur, his mother's father, with whom he lived a voluntary exile three years. In which time, David having mourned daily for his son Amnon, and being now comforted concerning him, seeing he was dead, began to hone after his son Absalom again.

This being observed by Joab, the king's general, and cousin-german to Absalom, he bent his mind to contrive a way to obtain Absalom's pardon, and restore him to the favour of the king his father. Wherefore sending to Tekoa, a town about six miles from Jerusalem, where the prophet Amos afterwards lived, Amos i. 1, he fetched from thence a wise woman ; whom, having told her what she should say, he desired to feign herself a mourner, and putting on mourning apparel, to go to the king as one that had a long time mourned for the dead.

The woman thus instructed, went to the king, 2 Sam. xiv, and falling on her face to the ground, to do obeisance to him, said, ' Help, O king ! ' The king thereupon asking her what she ailed, she answered, ' I am a widow woman, and my husband is dead : and thy handmaid had two sons, who strove together in the field ; and there being none to part them, the one smote the other, and slew him. And now, said she, the whole family is risen up against thine handmaid, and would have me deliver up him that smote his brother, that they may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew : and so destroying the heir also, they would quench that little spark of life which is left to our family, and not leave to my husband either name or remainder upon the earth.'

The king, having heard her complaint and request, bid her go home, and he would give charge concerning her. But this being too general an answer, the woman told him ' If he would protect her son against the avengers of blood, the iniquity of his having

killed his brother in the fray, should be upon her and her father's house; and the king and his throne should be guiltless.' Whereupon the king bid her, whosoever should molest her on that occasion, bring him to him, and he would take such a course with him that he should not trouble her any more. This yet was not home enough to reach the case; for she aimed at getting a promise from him, that he would pardon her son: wherefore, to draw the king still further on, she again bespake him thus, 'I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God, that thou suffer not the avengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son.' Upon that the king, to give her assurance, said, 'As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.'

The woman now reckoning she had fast hold of the king by his word, opened the matter plainly to him; letting him know, that under parable of a widow, mourning for the loss of one son, and for the danger of losing the other, she had covertly represented to him the grief of his people for the absence of his son Absalom, and their earnest desire that he might be recalled from banishment.

When the king saw how wilily he had been overreached, he suspected Joab to have had an hand in the contrivance; and asking the woman, if it were not so, she told him, it was; and that Joab had instructed her what she should say.* Whereupon the king calling for Joab, told him, he had granted Absalom's pardon; and bid him go bring him home again. Joab returning humble thanks to the king for having so graciously granted his request, went joyfully to the court of king Talmai, at Geshur; and from thence brought Absalom to Jerusalem: but when he was come, the king gave order, that he should go to his own house, and not come to court.

This restraint was uneasy to Absalom. Wherefore when he had dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and in all that time had not been admitted to the king's

presence, he sent for Joab, intending to have sent him to intercede with the king on his behalf: but truly Joab would not come at him. When therefore he had sent for him a second time, and he had again refused to come, Absalom, remembring that Joab had a field of barley lying near to his, bid his servants go set it on fire: which when they had done, Joab quickly came to Absalom, to expostulate the case with him, and to know what the reason was that his servants had fired his field.

Absalom told him he had sent for him that he might send him to the king, to intreat that he might be brought to the king's presence; and then, if the king thought him worthy of death, let him kill him; for he had rather die, than live under this confinement.

Joab then going to the king, and acquainting him how hardly Absalom took it, to be brought from Geshur two years ago, and not to be suffered in so long a time to see him; the king thereupon called for him, who being come, and bowing himself on his face to the ground before the king, was by him received with a kiss; a token of forgiveness and royal favour.

*** See a continuation of this Second Book of Samuel, in the beginning of Vol. II.*

.....
END OF VOLUME I.
.....





